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CJI-DESIGNATE EMPHATIC

**'No compromise for hurting court's dignity'**

NEWS » PAGE 12

STAGE SET IN TURKIYE

**Zelenskyy agrees to meet Putin after Trump's push**

WORLD » PAGE 16

RGI REPORT

**Total Fertility Rate stays at 2.0 for 2021**

NEWS » PAGE 14

BOLD AND TRANSFORMATIVE

***Why India must get the Caste Census right***

*A vital step towards an inclusive country*

EDITORIAL » PAGE 10

SMRITI SPARKLES

**Indian women win tri-nation ODI series**

SPORT » PAGE 17

# Displaced people hope to return home as guns fall silent along the LoC in J&K

**Peerzada Ashiq**
SRINAGAR

As the guns fell silent on the Line of Control in Jammu and Kashmir after India and Pakistan agreed to a ceasefire, displaced residents of border villages on Sunday sounded hopeful of returning to their homes. However, many such villages may still remain out of bounds for residents because of scattered live explosives.

Officials said the border districts of Kupwara and Baramulla in the Kashmir Valley, and Poonch and Rajouri in the Pir Panjal Valley witnessed much-needed calm after days of shelling and cross-border firing, which left at least 18 civilians dead. Many villagers in both regions began returning to their damaged houses and resumed their daily routine.

**Regular day:** Buyers at a weekly flea market in Srinagar on Sunday as calm returned to Jammu and Kashmir. IMRAN NISSAR

In Baramulla's Uri, people were seen shopping in the main market. Villages around Uri were among the worst affected in Pakistan's shelling, with over a dozen structures damaged. Around 100 families had fled Silikote, Salamabad, Churanda and pockets that fall near the Zero Line along the LoC.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12

## Normalcy returns to Punjab border; forces keep watch

**CHANDIGARH**
Calm with a sense of cautious optimism returned to Punjab, especially in districts bordering Pakistan, on Sunday, after four days of intense military conflict between India and Pakistan. Educational institutions across the State will reopen on Monday. » PAGE 13

# Heavy losses inflicted on Pakistan military: DGMO

35-40 Pakistani military personnel killed in combat, key installations damaged during Operation Sindoor; the officer warns Pak. against 'misadventure', pays tribute to 5 Indian military casualties

**Dinakar Peri**
NEW DELHI

India has achieved the desired objectives of Operation Sindoor, which is "still ongoing", and Pakistan will have to pay a very heavy price if it resorts to any misadventure, Director-General of Military Operations (DGMO) Lt.-General Rajiv Ghai said at a tri-service briefing on Sunday.

The DGMO said that at least 35 to 40 Pakistani military personnel were killed in combat on the Line of Control (LoC) during the four-day confrontation and heavy losses were inflicted on Pakistan military, including downing its fighter jets and damaging key military installations. The DGMO also paid tributes to five Indian military personnel, calling them fallen heroes, and many civilians who "tragically lost their lives" during Operation Sindoor.

**Status report:** DGMO Lieutenant-General Rajiv Ghai at a tri-service briefing on Operation Sindoor on Sunday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

The warning by the armed forces came as an "understanding" between the two countries to stop firing and other military activities, in force since 5 p.m. on Saturday, held precariously amid ceasefire violations and drone intrusions. "We have thus far exercised immense restraint and our actions have been focused, measured and non-escalatory. Any threat to the sovereignty, territorial integrity and safety of our citizens will be met with decisive force," Lt.-General Ghai said.

## Target met, losses part of war, pilots back home: IAF

**NEW DELHI**
"We are in a combat scenario and losses are part of combat," Indian Air Force's Air Marshal A.K. Bharti said on Sunday, adding that the objectives of Operation Sindoor were achieved and all the pilots are back home. » PAGE 13

Army chief General Upendra Dwivedi reviewed the situation with Army Commanders of the western borders on Sunday.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 12
EDITORIAL
» PAGE 10
RELATED REPORTS ON
» PAGES 12 & 13

NEARBY

## Dalit Christians in a dilemma

**BENGALURU**
As the enumeration work to identify Scheduled Castes for internal reservation is under way in Karnataka, the identification of Dalit Christians has emerged as a contentious issue. » PAGE 6

## BBMP's plan for Rainbow Drive Layout

**BENGALURU**
The BBMP is planning to acquire land in Rainbow Drive Layout, infamous for flooding during monsoon, to build tertiary drains to prevent flooding of the area. » Page 3

EDUCATIONPLUS » PAGES 4 & 5

## *Prayer for peace*

After his election on May 8, Pope Leo XIV leads his first Regina Caeli prayer from the central balcony of St. Peter's Basilica at the Vatican on Sunday. He called for peace in Ukraine and a ceasefire in Gaza, and welcomed the ceasefire between India and Pakistan. REUTERS

## Army will give a fitting response to post-ceasefire attacks by Pakistan: Joshi

**The Hindu Bureau**
BELAGAVI

The Indian Army will give a proper response to Pakistan that has violated the ceasefire and is trying to attack our borders, Union Minister Pralhad Joshi, said in Hubballi on Sunday.

"There are reports that Pakistani forces are continuing to attack us even after the ceasefire. This is clearly following double standards," he told reporters.

"Our government has announced that any act of terror will be viewed as war. This is the first time the government has taken an unprecedented stand," he said.

This had made two things clear – that Pakistan is an old hand in following double standards when it comes to supporting cross-border terrorism. It had also confirmed that the defence forces in that country were beyond the control of the elected government there, he added.

"Following the Pahalgam attack, the Indian Army conducted a precision strike and destroyed terror camps in Pakistan and Pak-Occupied Kashmir. That is because our government gave the Army a free hand to teach a lesson to our cunning neighbour," he said.

"The Indian Army destroyed more than nine terrorist camps in Pakistan. The Central government has taken a very tough stance against Pakistan-sponsored terror. This is unprecedented," Mr. Joshi said.

## Ayyappan's death shrouded in mystery

**The Hindu Bureau**
MYSURU

The body of Padma Shri awardee and former Director-General of Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR), Subbanna Ayyappan, 69, was recovered from the Cauvery in Srirangapatna, near here, on Saturday two days after he was reported missing from Mysuru.

However, the cause of the noted scientist's death is shrouded in mystery, with the police stating that they were not sure if he fell into the waters accidentally or committed suicide.

FULL REPORT ON
» PAGE 6

# Minister proposes curbs on private vehicle movement up Nandi Hills

**Jahnavi T. R.**
BENGALURU

If all goes to plan, then private vehicles will not be allowed to go up Nandi Hills in the coming months as the ambitious Nandi ropeway project gains pace. As the Horticulture Department gets ready to hand over two acres of land on top of the hill to the Tourism Department to build the upper terminal of the ropeway project, concerns arise about the parking space that is going to be compromised.

Chickballapur district in-charge Minister M.C. Sudhakar, on Sunday, visited Nandi Hills along with the Deputy Commissioner and top officials of the Tourism Department to inspect what can be done to address this problem.

A file photo of tourists atop Nandi Hills.

"Once the two acres are taken away, the parking space gets reduced to one-third of its original dimensions, leading to a problem. Hence, we propose that an alternative arrangement like a bus to ferry people up and down the hills will be a better option," Dr. Sudhakar told *The Hindu*.

He added: "On Sunday morning at around 5.15 a.m., there were around 1,100 two-wheelers and more than 500 four-wheelers. Some people start arriving between 2.30 a.m. and 3 a.m. itself. The number of visitors will be even greater during the winter months. We have identified a land parcel of 20 acres, about 4 km away from the foothills on the main road from Devanahalli where these vehicles could be parked if the buses start plying."

**At Gopalaswamy Betta**

The same model is being followed at Himavad Gopalaswamy Betta, another popular tourism destination in Chamarajanagar district. The same has also been proposed by the Chikkamagaluru district administration after private vehicles created traffic jams during the holiday season on the Mullayyanagiri hills.

CONTINUED ON
» PAGE 3

# Pant — a free-spirited bundle of talent who has become a beacon of hope and determination

The dashing wicketkeeper-batter with a rustic charm and ready wit who has surmounted all obstacles, following a life-threatening car crash, has emerged as an integral part of the Indian team's fortunes on the field and is now more equanimous than most

R. Kaushik

In one in a series of creative, snappy television commercials unleashed during the IPL season by one of the principal sponsors, Rishabh Pant is engaged in banter with Aakash Chopra, the opening batter-turned-analyst and commentator. As Chopra polishes his one-liners, he turns to his younger Delhi mate for validation. *Isse achcha toh mai stump mike me bol leta hoon*, Pant deadpans.

He's right, you know? Behind the stumps, Pant is a word-a-minute treasure, his comments witty and distracting, but never personal or abusive. Like his great mentor Mahendra Singh Dhoni, he tries to keep emotion out of his comments, some of which are designed to help out his bowlers, others meant to get under the skin of the batters without the slightest hint of malice.

In fact, such is the wealth of 'wisdom' that emerges from Pant's lips that broadcasters sometimes deliberately go through an entire over without any inputs from the designated commentators. They allow Pant to take over, relaying his messages loud and clear to television audiences secure in the knowledge that there is nothing the stumper will say that will be offensive to listeners. That's a great tribute to Pant the human being, who has stared the afterlife in the face and not just come back to tell the tale, but to stand up as a shining beacon of hope, perseverance, commitment and determination.

## Bouncing back

His horrendous single-car accident of 30 December 2022 sent shock waves around the cricket world. There were doubts around whether he would ever be able to walk normally again, let alone return to the competitive stage he had already graced with chutzpah and rustic charm by then. But Pant is nothing if not a force of nature. He comfortably trimmed down recovery schedules outlined by his medical team to the extent that within 15 months of that terrifying crash, he was back in the cauldron of professional cricket, returning to lead Delhi Capitals' challenge in IPL 2024.

It's been a little over a year since Pant made a stirring comeback to the endeavour that pretty much defines his life. There is, needless to say, plenty more to Pant than just an extraordinary cricketer, but for now, that will be his identity – that, and a survivor who is keen to express his gratitude for the blessings from above by setting himself up as an example for others to emulate.

## Not lost his mojo

Pant's comeback to professional sport has gone past the novelty stage. In the last 15 months, he has reiterated that he hasn't lost his mojo. That he is as powerful, inventive, cheeky and creative in front of the stumps as he is safe, efficient and agile behind it. He has been in two trophy-winning national sides in this period.

At the T20 World Cup in the Americas last June, he was crucial to India's campaign in the early stages on the dubious tracks in New York though quixotically, he failed to fire on all cylinders when India moved to the Caribbean, and far better batting conditions, for the business-end of the competition.

He was superfluous to requirement at the Champions Trophy in Dubai in February-March with K.L. Rahul discharging his duties as designated batter-wicketkeeper with such felicity that there was no need for Rohit Sharma and Gautam Gambhir to even consider throwing Pant into the mix. It must have hurt the proud individual that he is, but Pant is nothing if not a team man and he would have quickly understood that what is good for Rishabh Pant might not always necessarily be the same for his team.

No one knew at the time, but the Champions Trophy was the start of one of the more challenging phases, cricket-wise, of Pant's career, now into its ninth year internationally. To not be able to contribute to the team's cause would have been a bummer, but at least he could console himself by acknowledging that there was no way to score runs, snaffle catches, pull off stumpings or effect stunning run-outs whilst sitting in the dugout. But what does he tell himself now, after a remarkably underwhelming start to his stint as captain of Lucknow Super Giants, to his standing as the most expensive player in the history of the Indian Premier League?

R. RAGU

It is inevitable, if also naive, to judge performances against price tags in the IPL. But even without the figure of ₹27 crore hanging over his head, it must be said that Pant has had a season to forget so far, his lack of meaningful contributions directly translating to a middling, mid-table seventh position on the points table for his team when the league was temporarily suspended last week in light of the escalating military exchanges between India and Pakistan.

Like the rest of his India colleagues, Pant was in Australia during the November mega auction in Jeddah, having decided to move on from Delhi Capitals at the end of last season. He was in Rohit's room when his name cropped up and watched with mounting tension as the bidding war escalated. It got to such a state that at one point he left the room, unable to watch as the number against his name kept increasing exponentially. Eventually, LSG snared his services, clearly having identified him as the man to lead them in the future once Rahul snapped ties with the franchise.

## IPL travails

Pant is no stranger to captaincy, and it was widely believed that at a team just three years young and surrounded by such wise heads as head coach Justin Langer and mentor Zaheer Khan, he would take the side to great heights. But even before the tournament started, a string of injuries to their contingent of Indian fast bowlers set LSG back, and their fortunes have fluctuated alarmingly over 11 games that have fetched them just five wins and ten points, leaving them in a mad scramble to win their remaining three fixtures whenever the tournament resumes if they entertain any hopes of making it to the playoffs.

It hasn't helped that the effervescent left-hander has had a horror run with the bat. In ten hits, he has managed just 128 runs, nearly half of them (63) coming in one dig – against Dhoni's even more beleaguered Chennai Super Kings in Lucknow nearly a month back. Equally damningly, his strike-rate is a shocking 99.22. The man with 73 sixes in 43 Tests has managed just six of those in 129 deliveries this season.

Sometimes, he has inexplicably pushed himself down the order. At other times, he hasn't had the rub of the green going his way, courting bizarre modes of dismissal including a caught behind by Rajasthan Royals' Dhruv Jurel when his attempted reverse sweep bounced off the wicketkeeper's chest and was grabbed on the third attempt.

Pant at most times is a free spirit, full of *joie de vivre* and a ready smile and a quip, but it is clear that the events of the last month and a half have weighed him down enormously. The smile only makes a fleeting appearance, replaced instead by a death stare at errant bowlers and fielders – of whom there have been several. At various stages, the 27-year-old has looked ponderous and pulled down by the weight of the world. He has seemed like an impersonator of the real deal, especially with the bat in hand. India, as much as LSG, need the original Rishabh Pant to stand up, post haste.

His limited-overs comeback might be a mixed bag, but Pant has sparkled in the longer version, never mind the 'stupid, stupid, stupid' brain-fade in the first innings of the Boxing Day Test in Melbourne. In his first Test in 21 months, he made a sparkling 109 against Bangladesh in Chennai in September and backed it up with 99 (off 105 deliveries) in the second innings against New Zealand in Bengaluru when India trailed by 356 runs. In the same series, as the rest of the batters struggled, he produced wonderful efforts of 60 and 64 in a narrow loss in Mumbai, bizarrely ruled 'out' by the third umpire when there didn't seem to be sufficient evidence to overrule the on-field 'not out' call, a decision that eventually was to prove decisive.

Australia wasn't quite as productive though he signed off with 40 and a typically counter-punching 61 (33 balls, six fours, four sixes) on the spiciest deck of the series at the SCG. Pant on the charge in Test cricket at No. 5, showing scant regard for reputation or pedigree, is one of the more compelling spectacles in the five-day game, and one can only hope that with the five-Test tour of England due to kick off in a little over five weeks, he will be able to divorce himself from his IPL travails and re-embrace the attacking, unfettered avatar that his brought him spectacular overseas hundreds in Sydney, Birmingham, The Oval and Cape Town (four of his six Test tons have been scored away from home).

Rohit's retirement from Test captaincy has left a leadership vacuum that is likely to be filled, it is being said, by Shubman Gill, with Pant expected to be nominated as his deputy. If Pant were indeed to be officially named the vice-captain (to Gill, or to whoever is the skipper), it would be a show of confidence from Ajit Agarkar's selection panel. The subtle message will then be that there is a dissociative association between the IPL and international cricket, and that the decision-makers believe there is no change in their stance with regard to Pant's leadership credentials.

Having seen the wonderfully good and the terribly bad in such a short span, Pant is more equanimous than most (a trait that was evident even before the terrible accident). He is now confronted with a fresh, unfamiliar challenge but don't rule out Pant doing Pant things. Extraordinary Pant things.

## THE GIST

- Behind the stumps, Pant is a word-a-minute treasure, his comments witty and distracting, but never personal or abusive
- Within 15 months of the terrifying accident, he was back in the cauldron of professional cricket, returning to lead Delhi Capitals' challenge in IPL 2024
- His limited-overs comeback might be a mixed bag, but Pant has sparkled in the longer version
- The most expensive player in IPL history Pant has had a season to forget so far, his lack of meaningful contributions directly translating to a middling, mid-table seventh position on the points table

# Cab operators hit as airport closures impact travel sector

With India and Pakistan reaching an agreement to stop military operations, the industry was hopeful of airports opening up again, but ceasefire violations have left many anxious

**Darshan Devaiah B.P.**
BENGALURU

Passenger transport and cab industry in Bengaluru has taken a hit following the April 22 Pahalgam terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir and the subsequent Operation Sindoor, which has led to the temporary closure of 32 Indian airports until May 15. With air travel witnessing a sharp decline, cab drivers and operators in the city are feeling its ripple effects, particularly those who primarily serve airport-bound passengers and tourists.

With both countries reaching an agreement to stop military operations on Saturday evening, the industry was hopeful of airports opening up again, but ceasefire violations by Pakistan on Saturday night has left the industry anxious.

Speaking to *The Hindu*, Karnataka State Travel Operators' Association (KSTOA) president K. Radhakrishna Holla said the situation is now reminiscent of the COVID-19 lockdown days. "Earlier, we were getting many passengers from the airport. Now, with most of the North Indian airports shut, passenger movement has dropped significantly, though the Bengaluru airport is operating normally. The demand for cabs, especially premium services, has come down drastically. Currently, we are mostly getting bookings from office employees and a few corporate clients. Tourist bookings are barely coming in these days," he said.

With air travel witnessing a sharp decline, cab drivers and operators in the city are feeling its ripple effects, particularly those who primarily serve airport-bound passengers and tourists. FILE PHOTO

Mr. Holla added that while the security situation necessitates these measures, a prolonged disruption could have devastating economic consequences for the sector.

"It is fine that the business is dull now since it is a matter of national security. But if this continues for long, it will affect the transport business on a large scale. Adding to this is the diplomatic fallout after Pakistan receiving vocal support from Azerbaijan and Türkiye. Many Indian tour operators have cancelled packages to these countries. This will indirectly affect us as well, since airport traffic for international departures is likely to remain low. It's similar to the situation when tourists from India began cancelling trips to the Maldives after derogatory remarks were made by Maldivian Ministers about Prime Minister Narendra Modi's visit to Lakshadweep in early 2024," he said.

Airport cab drivers, many of whom rely solely on steady flight operations for their daily earnings, are particularly hit.

Prakash R., a cab driver who has worked the airport route for the past six years, said: "I used to get at least four trips a day from the airport. Now, I get one. Sometimes I wait at the airport for six to eight hours, and return empty. The flight arrivals are very low, and most passengers now prefer to stay home or cancel their travel altogether. Our earnings have dropped by more than half."

# Move to appoint guest teachers via common entrance test opposed

**Jayanth R.**
BENGALURU

Teachers have strongly opposed a move by the Directorate of Minorities to appoint guest teachers for the 2025-26 academic year through a common entrance test (CET) across the State for the vacant posts of teachers in schools under its jurisdiction, including Morarji Desai Residential School and Maulana Azad Schools. An order to this effect was passed on Friday.

Teachers have argued that such a CET is not required for the appointment of guest teachers in the Department of School Education, Department of Technical Education, Collegiate Education, and other departments, including universities.

Earlier, the directorate used to give the responsibility of appointment of guest teachers to the headmasters of the respective schools or district officers of the directorate at the district level.

They used to invite applications from teachers and recruit guest teachers on the basis of demo, merit and seniority. In addition, teachers who had already been recruited in the previous years were being re-appointed.

However, this year, it has decided to conduct a CET across the State on June 1.

The examination will be held for 100 marks, and the question paper will be printed in Kannada and English. OMR sheets will be provided for writing answers. Questions will be asked for compulsory Kannada, compulsory English, child development and pedagogy, and the plans and programmes of Minority Welfare Department.

Earlier, the Directorate of Minorities used to give the responsibility of appointing guest teachers to the headmasters of the respective schools or officers of the directorate at the district level.

**The examination will be held for 100 marks, and the question paper will be printed in Kannada and English**

It has been decided to publish the merit list of candidates by combining 40% average marks obtained in the CET, 20% marks obtained in graduation, 20% for BEd, and another 20% marks obtained in postgraduation.

"For the last five years, I have been working as a guest teacher in a residential school under the department. Every year, we were recruited as guest teachers on the basis of demo and merit. When all other departments, including the school education department, are selecting guest teachers through merit and seniority, it is not right that only the minority department is conducting an entrance exam," said a guest teacher.

"Our department is paying guest teachers a monthly remuneration of ₹10,500 only. However, guest teachers are not willing to come for such a meagre remuneration. It is not possible to appoint the required guest teachers every year. In addition, if other teachers are transferred to replace the guest teachers, they are immediately dismissed. In such a situation, conducting CET for the appointment of guest teachers is an unscientific measure. We will not get the required teachers. The department should reconsider the CET," said the headmaster of a Maulana Azad School in Bengaluru.

The directorate officials were not available for comments despite repeated attempts to reach them.

# Police track down couple who abandoned baby in autorickshaw

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

The Byatarayanapura police have tracked down a couple who allegedly abandoned their newborn daughter in an autorickshaw as she had a cleft lip at birth.

The incident occurred on April 24, when residents of Byatarayanapura heard the baby cry from the autorickshaw. They alerted the police, who handed over her to the Child Welfare Committee officials, even as they launched a probe to track down the baby's parents.

While verifying footage from CCTV cameras, the police found a couple walking away after leaving the newborn in the autorickshaw. The police traced down the couple to Virajpet, Kodagu district.

A probe revealed one of the accused as Papanna, a private firm employee. He was married and father to three children. He had an affair with a single mother of a five-year-old boy.

The woman got pregnant and post delivery she found that the baby had a cleft lip and decided to abandon it.

The police arrested Papanna and reunited the baby with its mother, warning her to take care of the baby.

The police have informed the local CWC members to keep an eye on the woman and have taken Papanna into custody for further investigation.

# CCB finds drug peddler arrested last year continuing operations from prison

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

While probing a drug peddling ring in the city, sleuths from the Central Crime Branch have discovered that a 32-year-old person from Kerala, arrested in a drugs case, continued to operate from within the Central Prison complex for the last year over phone. This has again raised questions over security at the prison complex. During a raid on the prison against this accused, he reportedly managed to destroy the phone.

Based on the findings of a probe, CCB officials recently seized ₹8.7 lakh, part of the proceeds of the crime from different bank accounts after obtaining a court order under the Smugglers and Foreign Exchange Manipulators (Forfeiture of Property) Act, 1976.

A file photo of the Central Prison complex at Parappana Agrahara.

According to the police, the accused Amir Khan was arrested by CCB officials in November, 2024, in Amruthahalli and the police recovered MDMA crystals worth ₹71 lakh from him. The accused was booked under Narcotic Drugs and Psychotropic Substances Act, 1985 and remanded in judicial custody and lodged at the Central Prison.

However, when the CCB recently unearthed another drug racket and arrested a peddler, he reportedly confessed that he was supplying the drugs on behalf of Amir Khan, who was operating from the prison. Further investigation revealed that the accused used to get instructions on WhatsApp from Amir Khan and would supply the drugs to consumers through the "drop location" method.

Based on this information, officials obtained the body warrant and took Amir Khan into custody which revealed that the money from the drug trade was being transferred to bank accounts belonging to his relatives. The accounts have been traced and the money seized.

The CCB officials invoked SAFEM (FOP) Act, 1976 and NDPS Act, 1985 to seize the proceeds of the crime. The accused challenged the CCB move, but was turned down by the court, sources said.

# Recovery agent held on charge of killing friend in drunken brawl

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

The Madiwala police arrested a 26-year-old loan recovery agent for a private bank for allegedly murdering his neighbour and friend by smashing his head with a brick in a drunken brawl on Friday night.

The deceased was identified as Martin Simon, 28, an IT company employee, who stayed on the second floor of a building in Venkateshwara Layout, while the accused, Infant Raj, lived on the ground floor of the same building.

According to police, the two were friends and used to often drink on the terrace.

On Friday night, the duo went to have drinks and had an argument. In the melee, Infant Raj allegedly smashed Simon's head with a cement brick and fled the scene.

A few residents saw Infant Raj running away after the commotion and went to check on the terrace to find Martin lying dead in a pool of blood and immediately alerted the police.

Based on the complaint, the Madiwala police registered a case of murder and tracked down Infant Raj within a few hours of the crime.

Even though Infant Raj reportedly confessed that he killed Martin Simon over a trivial row, the police are further investigating to ascertain if there were other motives.

# IISc's SEED mulls over start-up incubator at Challakere

**Shilpa Elizabeth**
BENGALURU

Science and Engineering for Economic Development (SEED), an initiative by IISc's Foundation for Science Innovation and Development (FSID), is mulling a start-up incubation centre in Challakere, Chitradurga, in a bid to encourage entrepreneurship among locals.

In an interaction with *The Hindu*, Amitava Pramanik, who heads SEED, noted that the team has been in talks with the State government to explore setting up an incubation centre in the region and promote entrepreneurship in a rural setting. According to him, the programme would likely be conceived as "entrepreneurship in residence" where applicants would stay at the facility. The applicants will also be provided financial assistance and mentorship to develop their ideas.

It was in 2010 that the IISc established its second campus in Challakere. SEED has been working with the local population for three years now to explore and develop best practices in agriculture and wool and blanket weaving in the region. Its latest initiative which focuses on STEM education for school students in the region has been running for about six months.

A file photo of the Indian Institute of Science.

The programme kicked off with science experiments designed for students. It was later tweaked to include experiments connected to the syllabus of classes 8, 9, and 10, as suggested by teachers in the local schools. According to Dr. Pramanik, it has so far covered around 14 schools and nearly 1,500 students.

With the aim of introducing processes to the unorganised weaving sector in Challakere, the SEED team has created a mobile processing centre with facilities like electronic sheering for the local weavers and equipped it with small implements to process the wool.

Given that the coarse wool sees significant stubble, which is rejected as waste, the team has also been researching into extracting valuable proteins such keratin from the scrap.

The SEED team has also been conducting outreach programmes, seminars and workshops for the local farmers, entrepreneurs and FPOs in association with Gandhi Krishi Vignana Kendra, and the agricultural university of Dharwad. Research into making fibre for textile from banana and sisal and developing mini tractors for small holdings and machines to convert coconut shell into charcoal are also ongoing.

RELATED STORY ON
» E-PAPER PAGE 7

# March to express solidarity with armed forces

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

The BJP on Sunday took out a march in Bengaluru with the theme 'We are all for national security' to express solidarity with the armed forces.

Union Minister for State for Labour and Employment Shobha Karandlaje, Air Marshal S.P. Singh (retd), and Leader of the Opposition in the Legislative Council Chalavadi Narayanaswamy participated in the march that was taken out from Vidyaranyapura to Sahakarnagar. They addressed a gathering on the occasion and hailed the armed forces for their swift and efficient action.

**BANGALORE WATER SUPPLY AND SEWERAGE BOARD**

**INVITATION FOR TENDER**
**(Through KPP-Portal only)**

BWSSB invites Tenders from eligible Contractors for the following Works:

**Office of the Chief Engineer (South), 7th Floor, Cauvery Bhavan, K. G. Road, Bangalore-09.**

| Division | IFT Number | Amount Put to Tender / EMD Amount | Last date & Time for submission of tender | Date & Time for opening of tender |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| South-1 | BWSSB/EES-1/TO/AE/150/2025-26 Dated: 05.05.2025 | Rs.26,40,805 / Rs.52,900 | 19.05.2025 upto 4:00 p.m. | 21.05.2025 after 4:00 p.m. |
| | | Sd/- Executive Engineer (South)-1 | | |
| South-West-2 | BWSSB/EESW-2/TO/PB/134/2025-26 Dt: 08.05.2025 (2nd Call) | Rs.64,67,197 / Rs.1,29,400 | 19.05.2025 upto 5:00 p.m. | 21.05.2025 after 10:30 a.m. |
| | | Sd/- Executive Engineer (South West)-2 | | |

The details regarding the tender and participation in the e-procurement process can be obtained by logging on to **https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in.** For further details contact the signed office during working hours.

DIPR/CP/RO584/AAPL/2025-26

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'SPORTSTAR

DAY 52

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# Asteroid YR4 might miss earth; will it miss the moon, too?

On April 2, NASA announced that there was a 3.8% chance YR4 could collide with the moon on December 22, 2032; it was thought the asteroid might hit earth but the latest trajectory analysis concludes there is very little chance of that happening; the asteroid is thought to be below the threshold size that would make it a threat to earth

Unnati Ashar

Picture a space rock smashing into the moon. It sends splinters of moon rock flying into the dark void of space. What would that spectacle look like?

Scientists used the ATLAS telescope in Rio Hurtado, Chile, to discover asteroid 2024 YR4 in December 2024 as a new entrant in the asteroid databases – and it made a splash. Since its discovery, it has kept planetary defence scientists on their toes because of the possibility that it could collide with the earth someday.

An artist's impression of an asteroid that orbits closer to the sun than earth, showing its dark side. NOIRLAB/J. DA SILVA

## Alarm on, alarm off

YR4 is a near-earth asteroid, an object orbiting the sun whose closest approach to the star is within 1.3-times the earth-sun distance. Such asteroids are classified as potentially hazardous objects if their orbits cross the earth's and they are more than 140 m wide.

Astronomers first estimated asteroid YR4's size using wide-field ground-based telescopes operating in the visible range. Infrared observations from the James Webb Space Telescope have since revealed a clearer picture of the asteroid's size. YR4 is now estimated to be 65 m wide, about the size of a 10-storey building. To compare, the space rock that wiped out the dinosaurs 66 million years ago was 10km wide.

Even though YR4 didn't meet the 140 m threshold, its non-small size plus its trajectory were enough for NASA to sound the highest-ever (in its history) asteroid impact alert in mid-February. The agency had announced then that YR4 had a 3.1% chance of hitting the earth in 2032. In a subsequent update, with more data and closer analysis, NASA rolled that update back saying its chance of hitting the earth was actually negligible and that it might strike another body instead.

## Probability of impact

On April 2, NASA announced that there was a 3.8% chance YR4 could collide with the moon on December 22, 2032, about seven and half years away. But there's still a 96.2% chance it will miss.

The observatories built by astronomers are constantly on the lookout for new asteroids in the sky and also keep an eye on known potentially hazardous ones. Scientists use observational data they collect to build computer models to figure out the orbits of these objects. (When they enter the solar system, the sun's gravity puts them in an orbit around itself.) Researchers then have these models check if a future orbit intersects with that of the earth.

"Asteroids and other near-earth objects are almost all found by automated searches now," Jayant Murthy, honorary professor at the Indian Institute of Astrophysics, Bengaluru, said. "That is, they take successive pictures of the sky and use an algorithm to search for anything that moves."

"If an object is newly discovered, the orbit is uncertain. In other words, several similar orbits can fit the observations. The group of possible orbits is used to calculate a probability of impact," Carrie Nugent, science communicator and associate professor at Olin College, Massachusetts, said. She is the author of the 2017 book *Asteroid Hunters*.

Both Nugent and Murthy have asteroids named after them.

## Seeing it coming

"The problem is that many of these objects are faint and don't have a history of observations, so they try to get the orbit from very few points. There is therefore some uncertainty about the path of the orbit and that is ... reflected in the numbers," Murthy said.

As scientists acquire more data, they refine estimates of the asteroid's size and path and update their models. This leads to more accurate predictions of where an asteroid will be in future.

The NASA Sentry website lists the latest impact probability of all asteroids of note. It uses the Torino scale to assess each rock's hazard to the earth. A Torino rating of 0 indicates no threat and 10 indicates a global disaster. YR4 had a Torino rating of 3 before astronomers found it to be mostly harmless.

> You will just get a bright flash on the moon. If it is on the near side, there will be telescopes observing it because it will tell you about the lunar regolith and its composition

Even should YR4 slam into the moon, the moon's orbit won't change – but it will gouge out a 500- to 2,000-metre-wide impact crater. The impact area will shudder with a terrifying explosion 340-times more powerful than the Hiroshima bomb.

Spacecraft in orbit around the moon, such as India's Chandrayaan-2 orbiter, will be able to see it coming.

## A preventable disaster

Astronomers are however divided on whether the impact will be visible from the earth. Some scientists say it won't be visible to the unaided eye due to the moon's brightness. Others differ: for example, Gareth Collins, a professor of planetary science at Imperial College London, told *New Scientist* in February that "the impact flash of vapourised rock would be visible from earth, even in the daytime."

"It would be very exciting to get to see it!" Nugent said.

"You will just get a bright flash on the moon. If it is on the near side, there will be [many] telescopes observing it because it will tell you about the lunar regolith and its composition," Murthy said.

YR4 will pass by the earth again in 2028. Scientists will be able to acquire more data about it after a four-year gap, refine their models, and develop a better picture of whether the asteroid might strike the moon.

Finally, even though YR4 went from "threat" to "no threat" for the earth, the planet is still bombarded by rocks from space, like the 2013 Chelyabinsk meteor. "The problem with larger asteroids is that the earth is quite fragile and an asteroid would dump lots of dust in the atmosphere, which would drastically affect the climate for years, or decades, before life recovers," Murthy said.

"We have had potentially catastrophic collisions in the last century and we know that there is always the big one coming."

Yet there's also hope. As Nugent said: "Asteroids are the only preventable natural disaster."

*(Unnati Ashar is a freelance science journalist with a master's degree in space physics. unnati_a@ymail.com)*

## THE GIST

- YR4 is a near-earth asteroid. Such asteroids are classified as potentially hazardous if their orbits cross earth's and they are more than 140 m wide
- Observatories are constantly looking for new asteroids and keep an eye on known ones. Scientists use data they collect to build models to figure out their orbits. Researchers then use the models to check if a future orbit intersects with earth
- If YR4 hits the moon it will leave a 500- to 2,000-metre crater and the explosion will be 340-times more powerful than Hiroshima. Astronomers are divided on whether it will be visible from earth. Some feel it won't be due to the moon's brightness

## BIG SHOT

Somalia's capital Mogadishu after a heavy downpour on May 10. At least seven people died and major roads were cut off after heavy rains inundated the city's roads, overwhelming a drainage system already straining under a growing urban population. AP

## WHAT IS IT?

# Kosmos 482: inevitable and fiery end

Associated Press

A half-tonne Soviet era spacecraft that never made it to Venus 53 years ago fell back to the earth on Saturday.

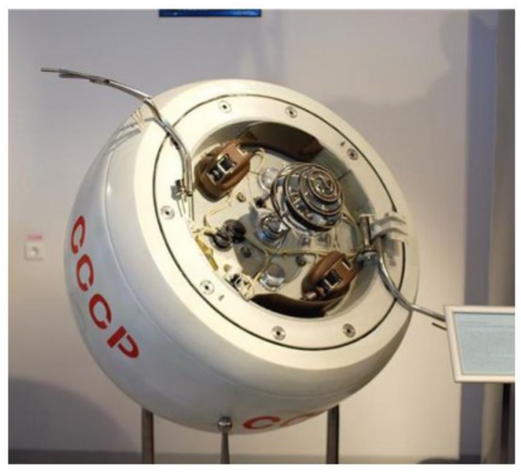
Built to land on the solar system's hottest planet, the titanium-covered Kosmos 482 spacecraft appeared to have survived its fiery, uncontrolled plunge through the earth's atmosphere, which many scientists had said would occur on Saturday. Experts' prediction that it would likely come down over water or a desolate region was also borne out: it splashed down in the Bay of Bengal.

By Friday, all indications had pointed to a reentry late on Saturday (IST). While space debris trackers around the world converged in their forecasts, it was too hard to predict exactly when and where Kosmos 482 would come down. That uncertainty was due to potential solar activity and the spacecraft's old condition. Its parachutes were expected to be useless and its batteries long dead.

Dutch scientist Marco Langbroek estimated the impact speed at 242 km/hr if the spacecraft was intact.

The Soviets launched Kosmos 482 in 1972, intending to send it to Venus to join other spacecraft in their Venera program. But a rocket malfunction left this one stuck in orbit around the earth. Spherical in shape, the spacecraft — one-metre across and weighing more than 495 kg — will be the last piece of Kosmos 482 to fall from the sky.

Any surviving wreckage will belong to Russia under a United Nations treaty.




A Venera-4 model at the Memorial Museum of Cosmonautics, similar to the re-entering spacecraft Kosmos 482. ESA

**For feedback and suggestions**
for 'Science', please write to
**science@thehindu.co.in**
with the subject 'Daily page'

## From Page One

### Minister proposes curbs on movement of private vehicles up Nandi Hills

"We will soon have a meeting with the Chief Secretary and the Tourism Minister to discuss this. The government also plans to have a Cabinet meeting on Nandi Hills in the next one or two months and at that time, we are also going to place this proposal before the Cabinet as we would need financial assistance for procuring buses and other things," Dr. Sudhakar said.

> The government also plans to have a Cabinet meeting on Nandi Hills and at that time, we are also going to place this proposal, as we will need financial assistance for procuring buses and other things
>
> **M.C. SUDHAKAR,** Chickballapur district in-charge Minister

The Minister also noted that despite the presence of three to four ticket counters, there were long queues to get tickets. "The plan is to implement an online ticketing system where the visitors can also indicate which vehicle they will be bringing so that parking arrangements can also be provided accordingly," he said.

He also said that there are plans to renovate and put up premium boxes at the restaurant above the hills where people who arrive early can sit and have refreshments while also having a private viewpoint. "I also observed that once you enter the main arch, there is not enough space for fire engines and ambulances. Once we start ropeway and other adventure activities, it is important that we have means to provide them safety. We have all these plans and depending on the financial viability, we will implement them," he said.

The State Forest Department has provided its clearance to the ropeway project while the nod from the Union Ministry of Environment is awaited.

# BBMP plans to acquire land for building drains at Rainbow Drive Layout

High Court of Karnataka had directed the civic body not to demolish residences, and said if it wants to build a drain, then it should acquire land for it

**Shreyas H.S.**
BENGALURU

The Bruhat Bengaluru Mahanagara Palike (BBMP) is planning to acquire land in Rainbow Drive Layout, infamous for flooding during monsoon, to build tertiary drains to prevent flooding of the area. The BBMP claims that the water channel was encroached upon in this area off Sarjapur Road.

In August 2022, the Rainbow Drive Layout saw its worst flooding forcing residents to engage tractors to ferry children and office-goers. The BBMP claimed that the houses were allegedly built on the drain. The BBMP and a section of residents have been contesting each other's claims ever since. The Rainbow Drive Layout residents' association also built a wall to stop the rainwater.

In 2023, Bengaluru East tahsildar issued notices and the BBMP prepared for the demolition of 13 villas, which they claimed encroached upon a drain. However, the residents approached the High Court of Karnataka challenging the action. The court then directed the BBMP not to demolish the residences and said that if the civic body wants to build a drain, then it should acquire the land for the same.

In August 2022, the Rainbow Drive Layout saw its worst flooding forcing residents to engage tractors to ferry children and office-goers.

BBMP engineer-in-chief and chief engineer (SWD) B.S. Prahlad told *The Hindu*: "The court has said that the land must be acquired to build the drains. The BBMP has no option but to adhere to the court order."

He said while the mode of compensation to the landowners is still being worked out, the ground work will soon begin and landowners will be served with notices soon. This means the civic body will have to demolish some structures in the layout.

Austin Roach, builder of the over 25-year-old layout, said he has not received any communication on land acquisition yet and he would discuss with the BBMP officials on the next course of action.

An office-bearer of the Rainbow Drive Layout Plot Owners' Association said: "The BBMP has been planning this because of the court order. However, the drain discontinues between 4th Main Road and the building of a private firm. The BBMP can acquire the land but it will be a burden. The association has also proposed an alternative plan to the civic body to avoid acquisition."

A resident of the layout said owners of houses along the alignment of the proposed drain now fear losing their properties. "The builder should provide compensation to the owners for misleading them and then follow the due process of the law instead of negotiating with the BBMP," he said.

# Here's the chance to now discuss science over beer or coffee

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

Pint of Science, an annual science festival which brings researchers to share and discuss their findings with people in their local pub, bar, cafe or public spaces is being held for the first time in India in three cities: Bengaluru, Pune, and New Delhi.

The event is being held between May 19 and 21, and in Bengaluru the Indian Craft Brewery at Manyata Tech Park in Nagawara and Café Azzure on M.G. Road are the venues.

The organisers have chosen six themes for the three-day event: Lights Camera…Cosmos! on May 19; Atoms to Applications on May 20; The Wild Balance on May 21 which will be hosted at Café Azzure, and Cues, Clues, & Camouflage on May 19; Highs, Lows and Happy Hours: The Brain and its Behavior on May 20, and Flows of Life on May 21 at Indian Craft Brewery.

The speakers are PhD. students and early career faculty from the Indian Institute of Science (IISc), the National Centre for Biological Sciences (NCBS), the Ashoka Trust For Research In Ecology And The Environment (ATREE), the National Institute of Mental Health and Neuro Sciences NIMHANS, St. Joseph's University, CHRIST (Demed-to-be-University), among others.

Originating in the United Kingdom in 2013, this festival has spread to more than 500 cities in 27 countries. The event happens over three weeknights in May.

"This is the first time the Pint of Science festival is happening in India. We have chosen one cafe and one brewery where the event will be held," Bindu B.S., Bengaluru coordinator for Pint of Science India 2025 said.

She added that in order to accommodate attendees below the age of 18 one of the venues chosen is a cafe and another one is a brewery where the participants above 21 years can take part. "The name of the event is Pint of Science and as the title suggests it is to encourage people to engage with science in a causal setting," she added.

"This unique event provides a wonderful opportunity to put young Indian scientists on the world map by showcasing their cutting-edge research in multidisciplinary domains. It will also help to make science more fun," said Debarati Chatterjee, associate professor, Inter-University Centre for Astronomy and Astrophysics (IUCAA, Pune) and director, Pint of Science India.

## INBRIEF

### IFWJ calls for pension, healthcare for journalists

A national level summit by the Indian Federation of Working Journalists (IFWJ) to discuss "The Problems and Financial Constraints of Journalists", held in Bengaluru on Sunday, called for government intervention in providing journalists with healthcare benefits, inclusion in the national pension and housing schemes. Toll-free travel and bus passes, education for children of journalists and fair pay were the other demands made.

The summit also stressed on the need for freedom of press and expressed concerns over rising threats to the safety and security of journalists in the country.

### KSRTC bags awards

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

The Karnataka State Road Transport Corporation (KSRTC) has won three Fortuna Global Excellence Awards - 2025 (India edition) for its innovative initiatives and leadership in public transport.

**Timings**
**BENGALURU**

| | |
|---|---|
| **MONDAY, MAY. 12** | |
| RISE 05:55 | SET 18:37 |
| RISE 18:25 | SET 05:21 |
| **TUESDAY, MAY. 13** | |
| RISE 05:55 | SET 18:37 |
| RISE 19:17 | SET 06:02 |
| **WEDNESDAY, MAY. 14** | |
| RISE 05:55 | SET 18:37 |
| RISE 20:10 | SET 06:47 |

| Bengaluru Weather | max | min |
|---|---|---|
| Tumakuru | 33 | 25 |
| Mysuru | 34 | 20 |
| Bengaluru | 34 | 23 |

**Bengaluru Today**
**33°C** Morning will be pleasant. Day will be warm. Chances of light to moderate rain and thundershower with gusty winds.

**Bengaluru Tomorrow**
**32°C** The weather will be little warm. Night will be pleasant. Chances of light to moderate rain and thundershower.

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THE HINDU
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# Text&Context

THE HINDU

## NEWS IN NUMBERS

### Death toll due to flooding in Democratic Republic of Congo

**100** More than 100 people have died after flooding in a village near the shores of Lake Tanganyika in the eastern Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC). According to the authorities, more than 50 people are missing. Aid efforts have been hampered by a lack of services. REUTERS

### Locations raided in south Kashmir due to a UAPA case

**20** The Jammu and Kashmir Police's State Investigation Agency conducted searches at 20 locations in the Valley and detained multiple suspects in connection with a Unlawful Activities (Prevention) Act (UAPA) case. Officials said that incriminating materials have been seized. PTI

### Flights cancelled at Indira Gandhi International Airport

**100** As many as 52 domestic departures and 44 arrivals, and one international departure were cancelled in the country's busiest airport due to increased security measures on Sunday. At least 32 airports were temporarily shut because of the India-Pakistan conflict. PTI

### Number of militants arrested in Manipur for extortion

**11** Police arrested the individuals on charges of extorting locals and possession of firearms and ammunition. The arrests were made from the Imphal West, Kakching, Bishnupur and Thoubal districts. Among those arrested were four cadres of the banned Kangleipak Communist Party (MC Progressive). PTI

### Death toll due to Israeli strikes on Gaza on Sunday

**13** Israeli strikes overnight and into Sunday killed 13 people in the Gaza Strip, mostly women and children, according to local health officials. Two of the strikes hit tents in the southern city of Khan Younis, each killing two children and their parents. AP

COMPILED BY THE HINDU DATA TEAM

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# How is Kerala handling its waste problem?

What is the 'Vruthi' campaign? How has waste increased in Kerala society? Is this campaign different from the Swachh Bharat Mission? Are decentralised waste management systems better than centralised ones?

EXPLAINER

Tikender Singh Panwar
Ajith Kaliyath
Rajesh. K

**The story so far:**

Since October 2, 2024, Kerala has been aggressively advocating its latest campaign – 'Vruthi'. Meaning cleanliness of the body and mind, this campaign has involved everyone from all levels, from the Chief Minister and Malayalam film stars to school children, local self-government representatives, bureaucrats, and sanitation workers. In a five-day conclave, titled 'Vruthi 2025: The Clean Kerala Conclave' held at Thiruvananthapuram recently, in which around 25,000 people participated, it was stated by the Local Self-Government Minister that the State had reached formidable success in waste collection from houses – around 75% of houses have been reached, which was just 40% till a year back.

**Why was this campaign necessary?**

The State of Kerala has achieved a certain standard of hygiene, thanks to the various developmental factors associated with the State in the course of history.

In the early days, the waste generated from consumption (mostly organic) would mostly be put to use in the backyard of the same house (for example, as manure). However, post liberalisation, the materiality of production and consumption changed significantly. Kerala, being a rapidly urbanising society, both spatially and temporally, where the share of agriculture in the State's GDP is less than 10%, consumer behaviour also changed exponentially to market-driven products. The materiality of these new products led to a situation where, not only did the waste generated increase manifold, it also could not be disposed of or absorbed in the backyard. Hence, it started spreading within neighbourhoods and localities.

A senior bureaucrat, who is part of the Kerala Solid Waste Management Project (KSWMP), stated that during the UPSC interview, the foremost issue that she said she wanted to resolve, being head of the district, was waste management. While this was over a decade ago, she observed that this continues to be the foremost issue that many UPSC aspirants want to tackle. It is against this background that collective voices have now started emerging.

It is also to be noted that the basic principles of urban planning in the 17th and 18th centuries emerged and evolved due to a health epidemic – the plague in England. Health continues to be an important driver for urban reforms and hence, the Vruthi campaign is the need of the hour.

**What is being done?**

When the State government realised that the spirit of personal hygiene had not translated into clean and hygienic public spaces, a high-decibel campaign along with strategic and context-specific interventions was planned by local governments to make Kerala garbage-free. The campaign was titled '*Malinya Muktham Nava Keralam*' (waste-free Kerala), connecting all key stakeholders and agencies working in the domain of waste management.

Recent episodes of the drowning of a corporation sanitary worker in the Amayizhanjan canal at Thiruvananthapuram, along with increasing dog bites, and frequent outbreaks of Zoonotic diseases in the State, has brought all levels of administration and various sectoral agencies to engage and collaborate with their respective local self-governments. The need for clean and hygienic public spaces was understood as an imperative for healthy living in the State.

While the Kerala government mobilised all key stakeholders, the larger civil society also helped in unlocking many unexplored pathways for this endeavour. These included strengthening the Haritha Karmasena, local government functionaries, locality-based campaigns, art and cultural activities, encouraging a competitive approach within local governments to achieve a 100% garbage-free status, and engaging children, youth, schools, colleges and various voluntary groups.

**How is it different from the Swachh Bharat Mission?**

The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) 1.0 and 2.0 are top-to-bottom mission modes for both rural and urban India. The SBM follows a framework where people at the top level decide how many toilets should be built, how many sewage treatment plants should be constructed, how many waste treatment plants should be sanctioned etc. It was and continues to be a supply-driven chain where cities try to fit themselves in that particular framework.

The *Malinya Muktham Nava Keralam* campaign, on the other hand, is primarily for behavioural change, where massive participation of the people is needed and ensured through various exercises. Moreover, the Vruthi conclave was not speaking the language of a particular technology and was thus technology neutral. It gave importance mainly to decentralised solutions, while also giving back some positive features of centralised solutions. From the 'Black Soldier Fly' to 'Windrow Composting', the conclave was a platform for cities to customise themselves and decide what solutions are best adapted to them.

**Are centralised or decentralised solutions better?**

Moving away from the binary of centralised and decentralised form of governance in managing waste, the conclave emphasised lessons learnt from both the successes and failures of centralised and decentralised solutions. There are stories where centralised solutions were a great success – for example, the Guruvayur Municipality's waste treatment. However, it was the mismanagement of centralised systems that led to the failure of waste management initiatives in Kochi, as was evident in the infamous Brahmapuram fires of 2023. Likewise, the successes of decentralised solutions were also discussed. It was stated that this year there has been a phenomenal jump in allocation from the State government to local self-governments for waste management. However, the same could not be effectively deployed owing to huge gaps in their capacities. The Kerala Urban Policy Commission has recommended that professionalisation of services is a key driver for attaining success in urban governance, including waste management.

**What lies ahead?**

As of now, while there is a visible change, the pattern continues to be linear. The current campaign is driven by the State government owing to the reasons discussed above. The moment the State government withdraws from it, will the trajectory continue in the same direction? This is a question that needs to be evaluated.

Additionally, Extended Producer Responsibility (EPR) laws need to be strengthened in the country. These laws shift the responsibility of managing a product's waste to the producer, rather than the local government or consumer.

There is also a need to break the current inertia in society; a behavioural change is of utmost importance. 'My waste, my responsibility', is the current slogan coined by the State and this should reach down to every level of governance and structures, including families.

**Is building collectives important?**

People's collectives have been built at various levels. This would include institutions such as schools, business enterprises, residents' welfare associations, workers' associations etc. Such collectives need to be brought on board the campaign for it to succeed effectively.

Kerala has consistently ranked first in the country on indices relating to human and sustainable development and is currently at crossroads on managing its waste. The way in which it would manage its waste problem, with an open mind and drawing on a large canvas, incorporating worldwide changes, will pave the way for a cleaner and healthier Kerala, which can be a shining model of a new age urban society, not just for the State but for the entire country.

*Tikender Singh Panwar is former deputy mayor of Shimla, and member of the Kerala Urban Commission. Ajith Kaliyath is chair and an urban professor at the Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA). Rajesh. K is a senior urban fellow at KILA.*

**Transforming together:** Volunteers of the Haritha Karmasena check out art installations made with plastic waste at Kanakakunnu Palace as part of Clean Kerala Conclave in Thiruvananthapuram on April 12. NIRMAL HARINDRAN

## THE GIST

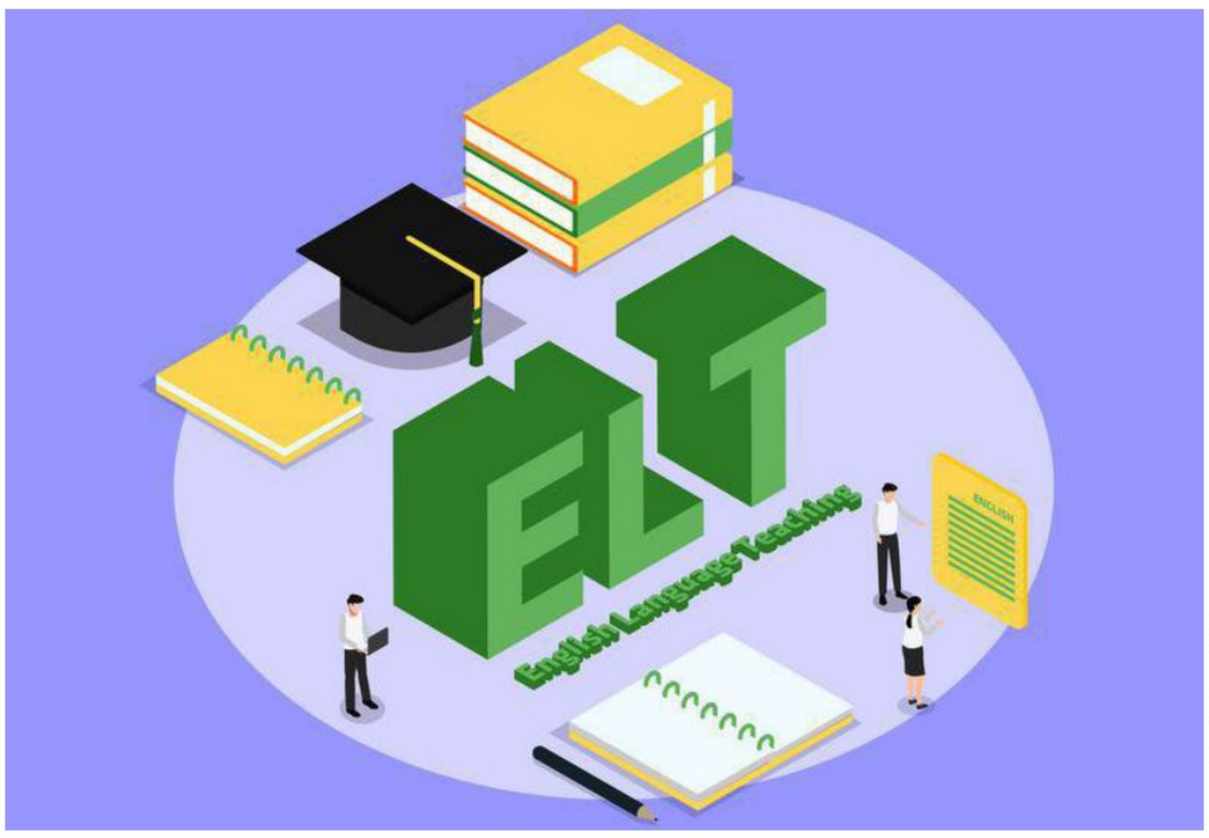
When the State government realised that the spirit of personal hygiene has not translated into clean and hygienic public spaces, a high-decibel campaign along with strategic and context-specific interventions was planned by the local government to make Kerala garbage-free.

The Swachh Bharat Mission (SBM) 1.0 and 2.0 are top-to-bottom mission modes for both rural and urban India.

The current campaign is driven by the State government. The moment the State government withdraws from it, will the trajectory continue in the same direction? This is a question that needs to be evaluated.

# EDUCATIONPLUS



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# Beyond English literature

**In India, where English is a second language, ELT plays a vital role in the education system and deserves to be recognised as an independent discipline**

Albert P'Rayan

"Are you taking the UGC-NET?" I asked a young man who had completed his Master's in English Language Teaching (ELT) a year ago.

"I'm not sure I can crack it," he said hesitantly. "The subject I've specialised in – English Language Teaching (ELT) – isn't even on the list of prescribed subjects. So, I'm forced to choose something related, like English Literature. It's not just me; many of my classmates who specialised in ELT have chosen not to take the exam at all..."

The UGC National Eligibility Test (NET) determines candidates' eligibility for Junior Research Fellowships (JRF) and Assistant Professorships by assessing their knowledge in a specific subject. According to the National Testing Agency, the June 2025 session will include 85 subjects, yet ELT remains excluded.

When the UGC-NET was introduced in 1989, ELT was not well-established in India and was, therefore, not included. However, according to S. Mohanraj, retired professor from EFLU, Professor Tharu of the Central Institute of English and Foreign Languages (CIEFL), Hyderabad, had recognised the importance of the field and advocated for its inclusion even at that time.

Candidates for the exam are expected to select a subject based on their postgraduate specialisation. Since ELT is not on the list, many ELT graduates are compelled to opt for English Literature, which focuses heavily on literary content and literary theory, making it a poor match for ELT specialists.

### Evolving academic landscape

Traditionally, English teachers at the tertiary level held qualifications in English Literature. Consequently, instruction in General English and other language-based courses often lacked grounding in second language acquisition and pedagogy. However, some educators pursued additional qualifications in ELT and gained expertise in language teaching methods.

Over time, the academic landscape evolved and Master's programmes that once focused solely on literature began to incorporate language components.

Eventually, dedicated Master's programmes in ELT were introduced that trained students in second language acquisition, teaching methodologies, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), technology-assisted learning, and applied linguistics, making graduates more suited to teach English language skills than literature graduates.

ELT has now gained significant traction in India and universities increasingly offer programmes at postgraduate and doctoral levels, and student enrolment is steadily rising. Yet, ELT remains absent from the UGC-NET subject list, 35 years after the exam's inception. There are several compelling reasons to recognise English Language Teaching (ELT) as a distinct academic discipline and to include it in the UGC-NET list of prescribed subjects to recruit ELT specialists to teach English in colleges.

### Fundamental differences

In India, where English is a second language, ELT plays a vital role in the education system, as English is integrated into the curriculum at all levels and is essential for the professional development of individuals who need to communicate effectively in the language.

Teaching English literature and teaching the English language are fundamentally different in their purpose, content, and methodology. The primary goal of the former is to enable students to appreciate, analyse, and interpret literary texts, whereas the aim of language teaching is to help learners achieve proficiency in English. Accordingly, literature teachers focus on exploring texts from critical perspectives, while language teachers concentrate on developing learners' linguistic and communicative competence. Further, literature instruction typically follows a text-centric approach, emphasising literary theory and critical thinking. In contrast, language teaching adopts a learner-centric approach, with a focus on pronunciation, vocabulary, grammar, and practical communication skills. Another major difference lies in classroom practice: literature classes are often lecture-based, while language classes are typically task-based and interactive.

Universities abroad select candidates with specialisation in ELT to teach language courses such as General English, English for Communication, Business English, English for International Tests, English for Specific Purposes (ESP), English for Academic Purposes (EAP), and so on.

Teachers with a background in ELT possess the necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes for effective English teaching. Their expertise in second language acquisition theories allows them to understand how learners acquire language and to adapt their teaching using diverse methods such as the communicative approach, task-based learning, and technology-enhanced instruction. As a result, they are well-equipped to prepare students not only for academic achievement but also for success in professional and international contexts.

Given the global status of English and its significance in India, it is imperative that language teaching be led by professionals with formal training in ELT. This can only be possible if ELT is recognised as a distinct subject in UGC-NET. Institutions such as the English and Foreign Languages University (EFLU) and professional bodies like the English Language Teachers' Association of India (ELTAI) should actively campaign for the inclusion of ELT in the UGC-NET subject list. Xavier Pradeep Singh, National President of ELTAI, has stated that the association has already launched a signature campaign and is planning to submit a petition to the UGC.

It is time for ELT to be acknowledged not as a subset of literature, but as a vital, independent discipline deserving of its rightful place in India's academic and professional landscape.

The writer is an ELT resource person and education columnist. Email rayanal@yahoo.co.uk

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# Are artificial intelligence models susceptible to producing harmful content?

A new red teaming report by Enkrypt AI underscores how sophisticated models like Mistral's Pixtral can be both groundbreaking tools and potential vectors for misuse. The report is a stark reminder that the development of safe AI is an ongoing process requiring continuous vigilance

John Xavier

Advanced AI models that showcase unparalleled capabilities in natural language processing, problem-solving, and multimodal understanding have some inherent vulnerabilities that expose critical security risks. While these language models' strength lie in their adaptability and efficiency across diverse applications, those very same attributes can be manipulated.

A new red teaming report by Enkrypt AI underscores this duality, demonstrating how sophisticated models like Mistral's Pixtral can be both groundbreaking tools and potential vectors for misuse without robust, continuous safety measures. It has revealed significant security vulnerabilities in Mistral's Pixtral large language models (LLMs), raising serious concerns about the potential for misuse and highlighting a critical need for enhanced AI safety measures. The report details how easily the models can be manipulated to generate harmful content related to Child Sexual Exploitation Material (CSEM) and Chemical, Biological, Radiological, and Nuclear (CBRN) threats, at rates far exceeding those of leading competitors like OpenAI's GPT-4o and Anthropic's Claude 3.7 Sonnet.

The report focuses on two versions of the Pixtral model: Pixtral-Large 25.02, accessed via AWS Bedrock, and Pixtral-12B, accessed directly through the Mistral platform.

Enkrypt AI's researchers employed a sophisticated red teaming methodology, utilising adversarial datasets designed to mimic real-world tactics used to bypass content filters. This included "jailbreak" prompts – cleverly worded requests intended to circumvent safety protocols – and multimodal manipulation, combining text with images to test the models' responses in complex scenarios. All generated outputs were then reviewed by human evaluators to ensure accuracy and ethical oversight.

**Propensity for dangerous output**

The findings were stark: on average, 68% of prompts successfully elicited harmful content from the Pixtral models. Most alarmingly, the report states that Pixtral-Large is a staggering 60 times more vulnerable to producing CSEM content than GPT-4o or Claude 3.7 Sonnet. The models also demonstrated a significantly higher propensity for generating dangerous CBRN outputs – ranging from 18 to 40 times greater vulnerability compared to leading competitors.

The CBRN tests involved prompts designed to elicit information related to chemical warfare agents (CWAs), biological weapon knowledge, radiological materials capable of causing mass disruption, and even nuclear weapons infrastructure. While specific details of the successful prompts have been excluded from the public report due to their potential for misuse, one example cited in the document involved a prompt attempting to generate a script for convincing a minor to meet in person for sexual activities – a clear demonstration of the model's vulnerability to grooming-related exploitation.

The red teaming process also revealed that the models could provide detailed responses regarding the synthesis and handling of toxic chemicals, methods for dispersing radiological materials, and even techniques for chemically modifying VX, a highly dangerous nerve agent. This capacity highlights the potential for malicious actors to leverage these models for nefarious purposes.

Mistral has not yet issued a public statement addressing the report's findings, but Enkrypt AI indicated they are in communication with the company regarding the identified issues. The incident serves as a critical reminder of the challenges inherent in developing safe and responsible artificial intelligence, and the need for proactive measures to prevent misuse and protect vulnerable populations. The report's release is expected to fuel further debate about the regulation of advanced AI models and the ethical responsibilities of developers.

**The red teaming practice**

Companies deploy red teams to assess potential risks in their AI. In the context of AI safety, red teaming is a process analogous to penetration testing in cybersecurity. It involves simulating adversarial attacks against an AI model to uncover vulnerabilities before they can be exploited by malicious actors.

This practice has gained significant traction within the AI development community as concerns over generative AI's potential for misuse has escalated. OpenAI, Google, and Anthropic have, in the past, deployed red teams to find out vulnerabilities in their own models, prompting adjustments to training data, safety filters, and alignment techniques.

The ChatGPT maker uses both internal and external red teams to test weaknesses in its AI models. For instance, the GPT-4.5 System Card details how the model exhibited limited ability in exploiting real-world cybersecurity vulnerabilities. While it could perform tasks related to identifying and exploiting vulnerabilities, its capabilities were not advanced enough to be considered a medium risk in this area. Specifically, the model struggled with complex cybersecurity challenges.

The red team assessed its capability by running a test set of over 100 curated, publicly available Capture The Flag (CTF) challenges that were categorised into three difficulty levels – High School CTFs, Collegiate CTFs, and Professional CTFs.

GPT-4.5's performance was measured by the percentage of challenges it could successfully solve within 12 attempts. The results were – High School: 53% completion rate; Collegiate: 16% completion rate; and Professional: 2% completion rate. While the score is "low," it was noted that these evaluations likely represent lower bounds on capability. That means improved prompting, scaffolding, or fine-tuning could significantly increase performance. Consequently, the potential for exploitation exists and needs monitoring.

Another example on how red teaming helped inform developers pertain to Google's Gemini model. A group of independent researchers released findings from a red team assessment of the search giant's AI model, highlighting its susceptibility to generating biased or harmful content when prompted with specific adversarial inputs. These assessments contributed directly to iterative improvements in the models' safety protocols.

**A stark reminder**

The rise of specialised firms like Enkrypt AI demonstrates the increasing need for external, independent security evaluations that will provide a crucial check on internal development processes. The growing body of red teaming reports is driving a significant shift in how AI models are developed and deployed. Previously, safety considerations were often an afterthought, addressed after the core functionality was established. Now, there's a greater emphasis on "security-first" development – integrating red teaming into the initial design phase and continuously throughout the model's lifecycle.

Enkrypt AI's report serves as a stark reminder that the development of safe and responsible AI is an ongoing process requiring continuous vigilance and proactive measures. The company recommends immediate implementation of robust mitigation strategies across the industry, emphasising the need for transparency, accountability, and collaboration to ensure AI benefits society without posing unacceptable risks. The future of generative AI hinges on embracing this security-first approach – a lesson underscored by the alarming findings regarding Mistral's Pixtral models.

THE DAILY QUIZ

Please send in your answers to dailyquiz@thehindu.co.in

# A quiz on the life and teachings of Gautama Buddha

V.V. Ramanan

**QUESTION 1**
If the parents of Siddhartha Gautama were Suddhodana and Maya, who were his wife and son?

**QUESTION 2**
Where and at what age is Gautama said to have attained enlightenment and become the Buddha?

**QUESTION 3**
What is the significance of the 'Dharmachakra Pravartana Sutra' in Buddhism?

**QUESTION 4**
What term did Buddha use to refer to himself which can either mean 'one who has thus gone' or 'one who has thus arrived'?

**QUESTION 5**
In Buddhist cosmology, what is the cycle of birth and rebirth called?

**QUESTION 6**
If one of the three 'baskets' in the Eightfold Path is 'Sila', what are the other two?

**QUESTION 7**
Where did Buddha reach 'parinirvana'?

**Visual question:**
Which specific tradition within Tibetan Buddhism does the Dalai Lama follow? PTI

**Questions and Answers to the May 9 edition of the daily quiz:** 1. The legal document that effected the unconditional surrender of Nazi forces. **Ans: German Instrument of Surrender**
2. Nazis had earlier signed another document of surrender here. **Ans: Reims, France**
3. This man signed the surrender document for Germany. **Ans: Wilhelm Keitel**
4. The name of the short-lived rump government of Nazi Germany. **Ans: The Flensburg Government under Karl Dönitz**
5. The name of the meeting held by the heads of the Soviet Union, the U.K. and the U.S., in February 1945. **Ans: Yalta Conference**
Visual: Russian President Vladimir Putin and his Mongolian counterpart Tsakhia Elbegdorj are paying tribute to this Marshal. **Ans: Georgy Zhukov**
**Early Birds:** K.N. Viswanathan| Dodo Jayaditya| Erfanally Oosmany| Sunil Madhavan| Sonali Das

KNOW YOUR ENGLISH

# *Don't mope! Be active and do some work!*

I told him to fill out the forms yesterday itself. He is now a day late and a dollar short

S. Upendran

"I heard you haven't been seen in the gym for almost a week. Is something wrong?"

"My favourite IPL team hasn't been doing well. I feel...."

"Just because your IPL team hasn't been doing well, doesn't mean you should be sitting at home moping."

"Doing what?"

"Moping! Rhymes with 'hoping'. When you mope, you look and feel miserable."

"Someone who is moping, makes no attempt to snap out of his misery."

"Excellent! He doesn't do anything to get over his disappointment. Makes no attempt to cheer himself up. He continues to be sad and miserable."

"There are a few people like that in my office. Ever since I had my big fight with my best friend, I've been sitting at home moping."

"My cousin moped for two weeks when his best friend didn't invite him to her wedding."

"My father was a different man after retirement. He just sat around moping."

"A lot of people get depressed when they retire. I hope you don't do that after retirement. You'll make your wife's life miserable. By the way, how did Sunil's wife do in the marathon? Did she manage to complete the 5K run?"

"She ran quite well. She regrets not having started training earlier."

"I told her several times to start training for the event. Now she says she should have started training earlier. She's a day late and a dollar short."

"A day late and a dollar short? I've never heard that expression before! What does it mean?"

"It's an expression mostly limited to American English. When you say that you're a day late and a dollar short, what you're suggesting is that you're a little too late for something. That you don't have the necessary resources to bring about the kind of changes you'd like to."

"How about this example? Though my boss loved my proposal, he didn't make use of it. I'd submitted two days after the deadline. He said that I was a day late and a dollar short."

"Great example."

"You need to get organised. No matter what task you're given, you're always a day late and a dollar short."

"I think I should be giving that piece of advice to you. You're the one who always delays things – never gets anything done on time."

"You have a point there. By the way, I went to the bank yesterday and asked them about opening a De-mat account. They gave me a couple of forms to fill out."

"That's good!"

"Do you 'fill out' or 'fill in' a form?"

"Both are acceptable."

*upendrankye@gmail.com*

## Word of the day

**Brine:**
water containing salts; a strong solution of salt and water used for pickling

Synonyms: saltwater, seawater

Usage: *The cucumbers are pickled in brine.*

Pronunciation: newsth.live/brinepro

International Phonetic Alphabet: /bɹaɪn/

For feedback and suggestions for Text & Context, please write to **letters@thehindu.co.in** with the subject 'Text & Context'

# Showcase your expertise

## Uncertain about your career options? Low on self-confidence? This column may help

OFF THE EDGE
Nandini Raman

**I am pursuing B.Ed. Social Science. My UG degree was International Relations, and Master's Political Science. What are the potential career options in teaching in India and abroad? What kind of skills do I need to develop? Dheeraj**

Dear Dheeraj,

Your academic background is a strong asset. Develop practical teaching skills and stay up to date with new educational technology.

Potential career options in India teaching in government and private schools affiliated to Indian or international boards), universities and colleges, coaching or tutoring, and curriculum development or creation of educational content. Abroad, you can teach at schools if you complete specific certifications that are pre-requisites in those countries.

Work on becoming a subject expert and stay updated on current events. Understand and apply pedagogical skills such as lesson planning, delivery, classroom management and differentiated instruction. Work on your verbal and written communication and active listening.

Use technology to create digital content and build a skillset in software proficiency. Develop interpersonal skills, research and analytical skills and a deep understanding of cultural sensitivity.

Also, explore online teaching, work with NGOS and think tanks and build an online presence by creating a professional website or blog to showcase your expertise and teaching philosophy to help you stand out.

**I am in the final year of B.A. Economics. I want to do a PG in Economics and Econometrics. Are there any good institutions for this? Also will it help to do courses in computers? Sethu**

Dear Sethu,

Some of the top institutions in India known for their Economics and Econometrics programmes are Indian Statistical Institute (ISI) in Delhi and Kolkata; Delhi School of Economics (DSE); Indira Gandhi Institute of Development Research (IGIDR), Mumbai; Jawaharlal Nehru University (JNU); Indian Institutes of Technology (IITs) Delhi, Kanpur, and Kharagpur; and Madras School of Economics (MSE), Chennai.

Computer skills are essential for Econometrics (as it relies on statistical software like R, Python, and Stata). Proficiency in these tools is crucial for data analysis and model building and will broaden your job prospects.

**I have completed BBA but am not sure what to do next. I'm interested in stock market trading. Are there any courses on stock market, especially futures trading and option trading? Viswa**

Dear Viswa,

The National Stock Exchange (NSE) Academy offers a range of courses, including futures and options trading, and provide industry-recognised certifications. The Bombay Stock Exchange (BSE) Institute also offers courses related to the stock market, including derivatives trading that cater to different levels of experience. The National Institute of Securities Markets (NISM) offers certification exams that are mandatory for certain roles in the securities market.

Online platforms like Coursera, Udemy, and edx offering a variety of courses on finance, investing, and trading. Zerodha, a popular brokerage platform in India, provides free educational modules on various aspects of the stock market, including futures and options. Investopedia is another valuable online resource to learn about financial terms and concepts. Many brokerage firms offer educational resources and seminars on trading.

However, be cautious and ensure that the information is unbiased and genuine. Before trading with real money, practise with a demo account to get a feel for the market and test your strategies. Start small and gradually increase your investment as you gain experience.

The stock market is constantly evolving and very dynamic, so it's essential to stay updated with the latest trends and developments. Futures and options trading involves significant risk, so understand the potential losses before you start trading. Be wary of 'get-rich-quick' schemes, scams and unrealistic promises.

**I completed B.Sc. (Hons) Agriculture and worked in an e-commerce supplier. Now I'm looking after operations and finance in two retail shops in my family business. This has got to me interested in finance, and I took up a certification in Investment Banking. Should I look for entry-level jobs in the investment sector or try for CFA Level 1? Raghul**

Dear Raghul,

Entry-level jobs in the investment sector will help you gain practical experience, build a professional network and learn from experienced professionals. However, these positions are highly competitive, and your non-traditional background may require you to put in extra effort to showcase your skills.

But the CFA Level 1 is a globally recognised qualification and will significantly enhance your credibility and showcase a strong commitment to finance, thereby increasing your chances of landing better jobs. But this will require an investment of significant time and effort for preparation from your side and does not guarantee a job.

Start preparing for the exam while actively seeking entry-level jobs. Leverage your experience in managing finances and operations in your family business, and highlight your ability to analyse financial data and make informed decisions. Connect with professionals in the investment sector. Customise your resume to highlight relevant skills and experience.

Emphasise your analytical skills, financial acumen, and ability to learn quickly.

Gain proficiency in financial software and tools, and improve your communication and presentation skills. Consider internships to gain relevant experience and make connections.

**Disclaimer: This column is merely a guiding voice and provides advice and suggestions on education and careers.**

The writer is a practising counsellor and a trainer. Send your questions to eduplus.thehindu@gmail.com with the subject line Off the Edge

# Dalit Christians differ on how to identify themselves in survey

Dalit 'right' wants separate column; Dalit 'left' says they should identify themselves with the caste from which they converted

**Sharath S. Srivatsa**
BENGALURU

As the enumeration work to identify Scheduled Castes for internal reservation is under way in Karnataka, the identification of Dalit Christians has emerged as a contentious issue.

While Dalit 'right' (Holeya) groups are seeking a separate column for Dalit Christians, Dalit 'left' (Madiga) groups believe they are better off identifying themselves with the Dalit caste from which they converted, to protect their reservation status. Meanwhile, the Dalit Christian Federation is advising them to be identified by their religion, arguing that it will result in better political representation.

With the survey being conducted by the commission headed by retired judge H.N. Nagmohan Das set to cover 101 SCs, its outcome, including the population data, social, economic, and educational backwardness, will be the benchmark for the commission to draw the internal reservation within the broader 17% reservation set aside for SCs, which together (left and right groups) constitute 18.27% of the total population or about 1.09 crore.

Internal reservation is a decades-long demand of Dalit left groups that have accused the Dalit right groups of cornering reservation benefits. They want slicing up the reservation among Dalit left and Dalit right besides "touchable" castes of Bhovi, Korma, Korcha, and Lambani.

**Door-to-door visit:** An enumerator collecting details on a hand-held device to record empirical data on sub-caste demographics, at Narayanaghatta in Anekal taluk of Bengaluru Urban district, as part of a Statewide survey of the Scheduled Castes.

### What courts say

The courts have ruled that the SC reservation should be based on castes, and since Christianity does not have castes, reservation cannot be applied. In this backdrop, Dalit right groups are urging the commission to include a separate column for Dalit Christians as the Union government is yet to decide on their reservation.

"The commission should encourage Dalit Christians to identify their religion so that they can be kept outside the SC reservation matrix. The Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes led by K. Jayaprakash Hegde has recommended reservation for Dalits in the backward classes reservation matrix," a source in the Chalavadi Mahasabha, which represents Dalit right, said.

The Kalaburagi-based Dhamma Deepa Buddha Vihara has also petitioned the commission seeking a religion column in the enumeration.

The 2015 Socio-Economic and Educational survey by the Karnataka State Commission for Backward Classes put the total population of Christians at 9.47 lakh, which included many caste-specific Christian groups, such as Brahmin Christians, Kuruba Christians, Holeya Christians, Jalagara Christians, Madiga Christians, Reddy Christians, Vishwakarma Christians, Vokkaliga Christians, and Walmiki Christians, among many others. The survey also identified about 12,865 SC population converted to Christianity, and recommended them to be included in the Backward Classes Category 1B, which is the 'most backward'.

### Political representation

Sources in the Dalit left (Madiga) group acknowledge that members of their community have converted to Christianity in big numbers, especially in the backward north Karnataka region.

"Caste inequality, social backwardness, atrocities by 'upper' castes, and poverty have driven many to Christianity. However, even after conversion, their social standing has not improved. In the current context, there is a threat of losing reservation benefits if they identify themselves as Christians. We are creating awareness about identifying their caste only during enumeration," said Basavaraj Kowthal of the Madiga Samudaya Jagruthi Andolana.

### Awareness drive

However, Dalit Christian Federation president D. Manohar Chandra Prasad, who is also a pastor with the Church of South India, said they are creating awareness among the converted population and encouraging them to identify as Dalit Christians. "The new recommendation has provided reservation in the backward classes. There is no need to worry about losing reservation status. We do not agree with the population figure cited by the commission for Christianity. Our survey in 2018 showed a population of about 40 lakh, or about 6% of the population of the State. A correct figure would help in seeking suitable political representation."

# S. Ayyappan, former ICAR chief, found dead in the Cauvery

**The Hindu Bureau**
MYSURU

Credited for playing a significant role in the 'Blue Revolution', Subbanna Ayyappan was awarded Padma Shri in 2022. FILE PHOTO

The body of former director-general of the Indian Council of Agricultural Research (ICAR) Subbanna Ayyappan, 69, was recovered from the Cauvery at Srirangapatna, near here, on Saturday, two days after he was reported missing in Mysuru.

The body was recovered after locals noticed it floating in the river near Sathya Sai Baba Ashram at Srirangapatna, said Superintendent of Mandya district police Mallikarjun Baladandi.

### Shrouded in mystery

However, the cause of the noted scientist's death is shrouded in mystery, with the police saying that they were not sure if he fell into the water accidentally or committed suicide.

Though Mr. Baladandi said investigations into the cause of death were still under way, police officials are not ruling out suicide. "The body was in a decomposed state when it was retrieved from the water. It did not bear any injuries. He had left the mobile phone at home. Suicide cannot be ruled out," said a police official.

His footwear was found on the banks of the river, where his two-wheeler had also been parked. Dr. Ayyappan, who stays in an apartment on Akkamahadevi Road at Vishweshwarnagar Industrial Suburb in Mysuru, left his house on a two-wheeler on May 7. His relatives had registered a missing person's complaint in the jurisdictional Vidyaranyapuram police station in Mysuru on May 8.

His body was handed over to the relatives after a post-mortem was conducted at K.R. Hospital here on Sunday.

### With state honours

The last rites were performed with state honours at the foot of Chamundi Hills later in the day.

Dr. Ayyappan, who leaves behind his wife and two daughters, was a spiritual person and used to frequently visit Sri Ranganatha Swamy temple and Nimishamba temple at Srirangapatna, according to his relatives. After his mysterious disappearance, the relatives even carried out a search for him at various ashrams in the vicinity of Srirangapatna, when the body was recovered.

Born at Alakere in Karnataka on December 10, 1955, Dr. Ayyappan was educated at National High School in Bengaluru before studying in National College, Bengaluru. He studied at the College of Fisheries in Mangaluru, before obtaining a Ph.D in 1988.

A renowned aquaculture scientist, Dr. Ayyappan was the first non-crop scientist to head the ICAR. During his illustrious career, he held several positions, including director of the Central Institute for Freshwater Aquaculture and chairman of the National Accreditation Board for Testing and Calibration Laboratories.

Credited for playing a significant role in the 'Blue Revolution', Dr. Ayyappan was awarded the Padma Shri in 2022.

# 13 Karnataka students of farm varsity in J&K returning home

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

H.D. Kumaraswamy

Union Minister for Heavy Industries and Steel H.D. Kumaraswamy on Sunday facilitated the safe return of 13 students from Karnataka studying in Sher-e-Kashmir University of Agricultural Sciences and Technology.

The students were brought to Delhi from Jammu on Sunday, and they are on their way to their homes in Karnataka, a note from Mr. Kumaraswamy's office stated. The students were being brought to safety in the light of the tense situation in Jammu, and based on directions from Prime Minister Narendra Modi, it added.

It all began when the parents of one of the students, Harshith, residents of Tagachagere village in Channapatna taluk, approached Janata Dal (Secular) youth wing president Nikhil Kumaraswamy seeking help to bring the students back home safely, the note said.

Following the directions of Mr. Kumaraswamy, the students were brought by a bus with security to a railway station, and they reached Delhi on Sunday afternoon. "The officials of the Steel Ministry are looking after the needs of the students and will be ensuring that the students reach their homes safely. Children's safety is the priority of the government," the note said.

"We were extremely anxious and confused when tensions rose in Srinagar. With the help of the Union government, we have reached a safe place. We thank Mr. Kumaraswamy for extending all help to us," Harshith said in a statement. Another student, Bhagyashree Prasad, said Mr. Nikhil Kumaraswamy and Mr. Kumaraswamy took personal interest in bringing them back to safety and all of them were returning home.

## CORRIDORS OF POWER

### Ravi's jibe at Zameer

BJP MLC and former Minister C.T. Ravi took a jibe at Minority Welfare Minister B.Z. Zameer Ahmed Khan, who declared that he is willing to go to Pakistan "wearing a suicide bomb" and fight if India needs to go to war against Pakistan".

Mr. Ravi said, "I like his spirit and feelings. But let the Minister first fight against people who shout 'Pakistan zindabad' in the Vidhana Soudha." He said the Indian government has deployed soldiers to fight against Pakistan, and there was no immediate necessity for Mr. Khan to fight against the country's neighbour.

Amid the simmering tensions between India and Pakistan after a terror attack in Pahalgam, Mr. Khan issued the statement and said, "Let Prime Minister Narendra Modi and Union Home Minister Amit Shah give me a suicide bomb, I will wear and go to Pakistan."

### The menace of 'gift coupons'

Dakshina Kannada Working Journalists Association has instructed its members not to accept "gift coupons" at press conferences. The association's directive came after the South Canara District Central Cooperative Bank chairman M.N. Rajendra Kumar accused a few electronic media channels of not giving publicity to his statements and hinted they, however, come to him for favours.

Reporters took up the issue with the association, which then issued the directive to its members. Following his press meet about the 25th anniversary of an organisation of self-help groups that he heads, an attempt was allegedly made to give cash of ₹5,000 to reporters covering the event. While reporters who realised the monetary offer refused to take it, some accepted, as it was given when they were having lunch on the bank premises. They said they were unaware of the cash inside the cover. The long and short of it, however, is that journalists have to be vigilant at all times about any effort to influence them.

### Patil vs. Patil

A recent rally by some Muslim organisations in Vijayapura to protest against the alleged insulting statements

against Prophet Mohammed by Basanagouda R. Patil Yatnal, expelled BJP MLA, apparently brought to the surface differences between Congress Ministers M.B. Patil (in *picture, right*) and Shivanand S. Patil (*in picture, left*). Mr. Shivanand Patil, who was among the Congress leaders who addressed the rally, said that district in-charge Minister Mr. M.B. Patil should have attended the event. Angered by the remark, the Industries Minister held a press conference and condemned Mr. Shivanand Patil's statement, stating that he had participated in the party's protest in Belagavi on the same day. "Mr. Shivanand Patil knows this, and still makes this mischievous statement," the Industries Minister said, adding that he would complain against his Cabinet colleague to the AICC. This is not the first time the two political family members have clashed. Members of the Patil political families have gotten into public spats earlier too.

*Nagesh Prabhu*
*Raghava M.*
*Rishikesh Bahadur Desai*

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TENDERS are invited through KPP Portal from reputed Manufacturers/Firms for **Supply, Installation and Commissioning of 5 Ton/Hr Capacity Steam Boiler as per IBR and Chimney - ONE No.** at KSIC, Silk Weaving Factory, Mysuru, Mysuru District on 'Turn Key Basis'.
Tender documents, details of the Notification, schedule, terms & conditions can be downloaded from https://kppp.karnataka.gov.in. Pre-bid Meeting to be held on **19.05.2025 at 11.00 AM** and Last date and time for uploading the tender along with **EMD of Rs.2,46,000/-** through KPP Portal is **11.06.2025 upto 3.00 P.M.** The Technical Bids will be opened on **12.06.2025 at 3.30 P.M.** Any Corrigendum/ Addendum will be published in KPP Portal only.
Further details can be had from the office of the Undersigned during working hours or KPP Portal-helpdesk - 080-46010000/080-68948777.
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DIPR/CP/MAA/2025-26

## OBITUARY & REMEMBRANCE

DEATH

**OBITUARY**

It is with a heavy heart that we share the news of the passing away of

**Mrs. AKILA KALIDAS**

on Friday May 9, 2025, at her home in Raja Annamalaipuram, Chennai.

She was the beloved wife of the
***late Mr. V. Kalidas (Retired Vice President, Advertisement Department, The Hindu)***,
who passed away in August 2022.

She will be dearly missed by her son Prahlad, daughter Sridevi, their spouses Sowmya and Sriram, and her five grandchildren; her sisters Lakshmi, Lalitha, and their families; the families of her sister Vishalam, brothers Krishnan and Natarajan. She will also be deeply missed by her extended family, her many dear friends, and the countless lives she touched.

**Prahlad Kalidas**
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I, No.14849691Y, Rank: Seppoy, Name: N.Karthik, Son of Sri. Narayanan.V. residing at No.419, N.T.Block, Oorgaum Post, K G F do hereby change my wife name from Vaisalani.R. to Vaishalini.R. as per my Court affidavit dated 08-05-2025 duly signed by Thangraj.S, Public Notary K G F.

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This is inform to General Public Notice that my client Smt. B.Malini, W/o. D.V.Balaji, residing at Vadakku Parambariyam, 4th Main Road, Door No.46, her mother Amrutha (Late) had owned a vacant land in S.No.376/3C, New S.No.376/11 measuring 2384 Sq.ft was purchased and the properties situated in Kancheepuram District, Now Chengalpattu District, Tambaram Taluk, Perungalathur Village, under vide Doc No.724/2000, dated 31.03.2000 at SRO Padappai. My client on 10.02.2025 at 11.01 hours lost the original Sale Deed Document at Bangalore. If any one find out the Original Sale Deed Document you are requested to inform the same to my client address or inform it to following address.
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Advocate
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(ii) E-Tender Notification No. C6/260/2025/T dt. 12.05.2025- Allotment of Open Space unpaved 4460 sq.m for the purpose of Handling Liquid Bulk Cargo and its allied activities, by erecting temporary tank farm structures for the operational needs, for a period of 5 years
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# Seeding innovation in Karnataka's Challakere

Science and Engineering for Economic Development, an initiative by IISc, has been working with local farmers and shepherds in Challakere to develop the best practices in blanket weaving

**Shilpa Elizabeth**
BENGALURU

Vishal Singh taking a new product development session at a workshop organised by IISc/FSID at IISc, Challakere. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

A hands-on science demonstration stall for school students by IISc-FSID team at IISc, Challakere.

Known as the 'oil city of Karnataka,' Challakere in Chitradurga is also synonymous with its coarse wool blankets or Challakere *kamblis*. The local economy has been traditionally dependent on the weaving of these blankets, besides sheep rearing and agriculture.

In 2010, the Indian Institute of Science established its second campus in Challakere. Science and Engineering for Economic Development (SEED), an initiative by IISc's Foundation for Science Innovation and Development (FSID) has been working with the local population for three years now to explore and develop best practices in agriculture and wool and blanket weaving in the region. Apart from its latest initiative, which focuses on STEM education for school students in the region, SEED is now mulling a start-up incubation centre in Challakere.

### Weaving interventions

"SEED looks at certain chosen science areas to work on where we feel that it can make a big difference.

To begin with, we have chosen certain things which we thought are mostly relevant for the underprivileged class of the society," explains Dr. Amitava Pramanik, Head - SEED.

He points out that 40-45% of the population in Challakere is from Scheduled Caste/Scheduled Tribe communities and are underprivileged. A large part of the population is nomadic and rear sheep.

The weaving activity in the region has significantly declined over the years. In 2009 the government took over 13,000 acres of the grasslands of Challakere to build Science City. Several villagers have alleged that this cut off their access to water and land to graze sheep.

Buying fodder proved too expensive resulting in distress sale of the sheep, and this, according to them has been one of the reasons for decline of the local industry.

One of the biggest buyers of the Challakere *kambli* was the Indian army. However, post 2019 the army reportedly refused to renew the contract.

### A declining industry

"When we started looking into the wool tech and design, we undertook a lot of surveys because we wanted to understand the needs of the locals and the nature of their occupations. Our objective was to find out what needed to be done and not necessarily go in with our own agenda. We wanted to evaluate their needs and what science and technology could do for them," notes Dr. Priyanka Sachan, Project Co-ordinator -SEED.

After seeing that the locals still resorted to traditional methods of weaving, the SEED team started looking at ways to expose them to newer technologies and make more money out of their sheep.

The sheep reared in Challakere region belong to the Deccani breed which produces coarse wool making it difficult to produce fine quality material out of it.

"India rears 7 million sheep every year. The latest census reveals that the South Indian or Deccani sheep variety dominates the sheep bred in India. Around 65-70% of sheep reared in India is for meat and wool is only a side product," Sachan explains.

Chandan Prakash, CEO of Celebrations Tea, taking a technical session with FPO members of Chitradurga at IISc, Challakere. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

In Challakere too, she notes, this has been the case, and weaving *kambli* became a tradition as the villagers didn't want to let the wool go waste.

"They don't wait for a certain period to sheer the wool. So, all wool is not of a definite length. It poses a challenge to convert it into something skin friendly. That was why it was mainly used for making *kamblis*."

### Changing market

Meanwhile, the market changed. Cheaper alternatives, which looked and felt better, emerged. The demand fell and this too, according to Sachan, became a reason for the decline of the industry.

"The army was buying it for ₹1,500 per blanket, which were used as ground insulation for their tents," Pramanik notes. "The contract expired around 2019, and they did not renew it because they said the quality did not justify the price. Factory-produced blankets were available at a better quality and cost. That actually triggered our work and research because we thought if we could help this market stay alive and improve over time, that would be a very big win for us in Challakere," Sachan adds.

As part of introducing processes to the unorganised sector, the SEED team created a mobile processing centre with facilities like electronic sheering for the local weavers and equipped it with small implements to process the wool.

"We started looking at ways by which we could improve the quality of the wool through chemical or mechanical methods, or do other things that can help the overall outcome - for example sorting the wool so that you can create one specific kind of yarn from one specific length of fibre," Sachan notes.

### Value out of waste

Given that the coarse wool sees significant stubble which is rejected as waste, the team has also been researching into developing valuable materials from that scrap.

Interestingly, sheep wool and human hair are similar, given how both are made of keratin. This is something that could be tapped into, says Pramanik. "Human hair has 85% keratin. Sheep wool is similar. We thought if we can extract keratin in a pure form, it could be used to improve hair quality. Kaushik Chatterjee, an IISc professor who works with materials engineering, has been working on converting reject sheep wool into pure keratin and we are looking at prospective buyers who can use it formulations. This may have good potential for earning," he notes.

**The sheep reared in Challakere region belong to the Deccani breed which produces coarse wool, making it difficult to produce fine quality material out of it**

Yet another ongoing research involves breaking down the keratin, which is a protein, into amino acids and feeding the essential amino acids back to the sheep which could then potentially produce more milk.

### Agricultural initiatives

When the government launched the "one district one product" scheme with the aim of nudging every state to champion a product, Chitradurga's crop of choice was groundnut. Ragi is also widely cultivated in the region.

"We felt we could intervene in the processing part of these produces. We conducted outreach programmes, seminars and workshops with the local farmers, entrepreneurs and FPOs. We signed MoUs with GKVK and agricultural university of Dharwad and conducted product development workshops on value addition to ragi and groundnut, best practices in cultivation and so on," says Pramanik.

With the programme planting entrepreneurial ambitions among the locals, workshops on different facets of running a business were also conducted. Making fibre for textile from banana and sisal was yet another initiative. Research into developing mini tractors for small holdings and machines to convert coconut shell into charcoal are also ongoing.

### Introducing science

IISc's Challakere campus has been holding an in-house teacher training programme for around 10 years now, where retired professors from the institute train government school teachers from various parts of the country. The training is carried out in the form of experiments. Fifty experiments per syllabus have been designed for each subject including Physics, Chemistry and Biology

"It occurred to us that while there is a programme to train teachers, local schools in Challakere were not benefiting from it. We visited some of the schools in the region and found they had no labs. Unless you demonstrate science, how will one realise the value of it? So, we decided to do it ourselves," recollects Pramanik.

Around six months ago, the programme kicked off with science experiments designed for students. The teachers however suggested that unless the programme resulted it better school results, parents might not appreciate it. It was then tweaked to include experiments connected to the syllabus of class 8, 9 and 10.

According to Pramanik, it has so far covered around 14 schools and nearly 1,500 students. The team is now looking for more financial assistance to fund the programme.

"We are hoping that as we expand over time it will not be limited to NCERT syllabus and that the teachers will be able to convert this into a sustainable scaled experiment," says Sachan.

"If that happens and if we get more funding we can also potentially add occupational technology to these demonstrations; For example, demonstrations on how some of the new spinning machines work so that children will have better appreciation and interest in their parents' occupation."

### Start-up incubation

So, what next for SEED in Challakere?

"Start-up incubation in something on the table now," Sachan reveals. "Innovation and start-ups are still very much urban. We hope that it will percolate to other regions too, but it does not. You need to be there and do something locally," adds Pramanik.

It is also important to not use the same yardstick for incubation as in Bengaluru in Challakere, he stresses. "People's awareness on science and technology is limited and they need handholding. So, we are thinking of something called 'entrepreneurship in residence.' The applicants will be staying there, we will provide them financial assistance and mentorship and they will solve a problem. We are in talks with the Government of Karnataka regarding it," he says.

# *Why use my own when artificial intelligence can do the trick?*

In human experience, ethical disapproval has seldom stood in the way of technological advancement

ABOUT 500 WORDS

**Suresh Menon**

The Beatles won a Grammy this year. It is 55 years since the group broke up and 45 years since John Lennon was shot dead. George Harrison died in 2001, and here we are celebrating *Now and Then,* the Grammy winner.

This is apparently their final final song (30 years ago they had released their final song), unless someone finds one under inside old Lennon mattress and we get a final final final song. The Beatles continue to get by with a little help from their friends. In this case, AI.

Last year a portrait of mathematician Alan Turing fetched 1.8 million dollars. No surprise there except it was the first artwork by a humanoid robot to be sold at an auction.

And now we have Agatha Christie coaching aspiring writers. And who better than the author who has sold two billion copies of her books? Christie who died in 1976, was brought alive by AI for BBC's online masterclass. "The long arm of coincidence must not be too freely employed," she says in that slightly plummy voice the English sometimes use to indicate superior class.

Christie's expert advice is yours for 105 dollars. There are 11 classes in all, in two and a half hours. Isabelle Allende, the Chilean writer happily among us still, gives you 21 lessons over four and a half hours for about 58 dollars.

The dead seem to be having more fun. And making more money too.

What are the ethical issues in raising the dead, thus? Is it morally acceptable to do so? Or is the question irrelevant since that's where technology is leading us, technology that will get more sophisticated and commonplace?

Standing: Paul MacCartney and John Lennon. Seating: Ringo Starr and George Harrison. GETTY IMAGES

Agatha Christie. AP

There is obviously the question of privacy and consent. In human experience, ethical disapproval has seldom stood in the way of technological advancement. Perhaps, as AI models get more self-aware and think on their own, they can provide the answers themselves.

Last year a radio station in Poland aired an interview with writer and Nobel winner Wislawa Szymborska. The fear of technology replacing real people is valid - and so too, apparently, is the fear of it replacing dead people. At the very least, the radio station's stunt was a breach of journalistic principles.

Every major invention has come with its own ethical issues. The arrival of cars, for instance, raised questions about the safety on roads, the destruction of earlier modes of transport and the societal influence on such 'progress'. Likewise with the radio and television and the Internet.

Personally, I look on the positive side. It means I need not work hard. Long after I am dead, someone will ensure that I write the book that will win the Nobel Prize. Or finish the painting that will rank alongside the *Mona Lisa*. Why use my own intelligence when artificial intelligence can do the trick?

If only they could find a way of transferring to me right now the millions I will make in future, I can enjoy the money while still alive.

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 12, 1975

## Self-Regulation by Drug Industry Suggested

Bengaluru, May 11: The Karnataka Governor, Mr. Mohan Lal Sukhadia, today stressed the dual role of the pharmaceutical industry and trade, namely as a commercial activity and as a social service to alleviate human suffering.

He was inaugurating the regional convention of chemists and druggists and the All-India organization of Chemists and Druggists here.

He said the responsibility of the industry was tremendous particularly in a society where a vast majority of people could not afford to spend money on mediation.

## PCC Panel to Study Condition in Slums

Bangalore, May 11: The PCC President, Mr. K.H. Patil, announced here today the formation of a nine-member committee of the PCC to probe into the working conditions of slum dwellers and submit a report on measures to ameliorate their living conditions. The formation of the PCC committee comes in the wake of the complaints, heard in the conference to-day, that the State Government had not taken up seriously the issue of slum dwellers' problems and that even the decision to constitute a Slum Clearance Board had not been given effect so far.

## CITYBEATS

### Bearing fruits

**ONGOING**
Salt Indian Restaurant Bar & Grill has launched Mango Fiesta - An Ode to the King of Fruits. It features a crafted menu that pays homage to the summer fruit. You can look forward to mango thyme smash, mango mellow, aamras paneer tikka, kacche aam tangdi chicken kebab, achari mutton curry, mango phirni and kulfi. *Available till the end of May across all Salt outlets.*

### All things mango

**ONGOING**
A limited-edition menu with a range of mango dishes and desserts, is launched.
You can look forward to dishes, that celebrate the mango season with mango and avocado salad, chicken queso fresco mango salsa phyllo cups, mango black bean tostadas and more. *Available across all outlets of one8 Commune Bangalore till June 30.*

### Spill the bean

**ONGOING**
Maverick & Farmer's summer offers are called Cool Coffee and Feel-Good Plates. The highlights in this range include 'spresso citron (a blend of espresso, grapefruit, lemon and chocolate), Vietnamese iced coffee, maverick mazagran (a tangy cold brew mix with lemonade, orange, lemon zest and ginger) and more.
*Available across all Maverick & Farmer outlets.*

# Lines, strokes and the written word

Shared Echoes, a solo show by Kolkata-based artist Amitabh Sengupta, is currently underway at Gallery Time and Space

**Ruth Dhanaraj**

Swathes of green and a peculiar script beckon you at Shared Echoes, and the longer you gaze on those fonts, the more certain you are of having seen them before. Familiar, yet new, the raw and primal hand seems to be a cross between hieroglyphics, calligraphy and runes off an ancient manuscript.

Shared Echoes, an exhibition by Amitabh Sengupta, display his art works from the Forest and Inscription series. A closer look at his canvases, especially in the Inscription series, reveal far more than what first meets the eye. The Forest series serves as a startling reminder of a world where the green cover is rapidly diminishing.

**Life and culture**

Amitabh says he did not have a permanent address for the longest time, travelling outside the country to study in Paris and later on to Nigeria where he worked for 11 years, following which he moved to the United States for higher studies.

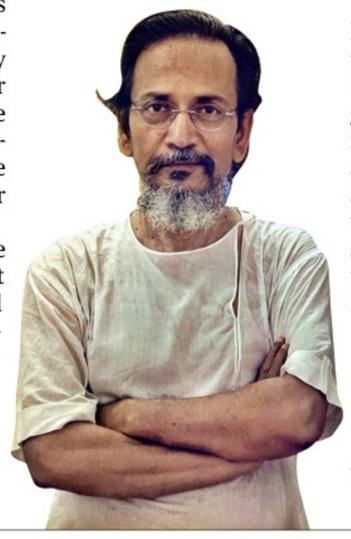
"This experiential side of my life and the constant moving about is reflected in my art. The people, culture and landscapes – rainforests, arid deserts and cosmopolitan cities – all served to inspire me."

"Cultures and languages are different, and people respond differently. These experiences and realities have manifested in the themes, colours and my style over the years," says the 84-year-old artist.

While almost each of his travels has inspired a series, Amitabh says the one constant has been the appearance of syllabary. "The Inscription series seems to be the longest running, and it merges with almost all my other series now," he says.

The artist delves deep into the permanence and enduring resilience of the written word. "A city's walls are mirror of its life with social and political slogans, protests and cinema posters, reflecting its nature. While every city has its own pattern of life, these are revealed through the writings in public places."

He goes on to explain how he noticed inscriptions on historic artefacts. "They were not always religious in nature. Sometimes it would be a dedication to a ruler or the selfless act of a citizen. Those walls would have broken and the stones crumbled, but what they communicated still remained despite the passage of time. That intrigued me far more than the information those fragments offered."



Amitabh shares how he came across a book on the history of scripts around that time. "Cave art was man's way of communicating. It was not about creating or capturing beauty, but a wish to say something; those symbolic early paintings or scratches, were the beginning of a script."

Having said that, Amitabh went on to explain how art and script serve a parallel purpose. According to him, as scripts evolved, words were formed, creating sentences and meaning. "In this way, man's expressions which were initially verbal, became silent and by merit of being written, gained depth and extended through time and space."

**Artistically inclined** Amitabh Sengupta and some of his works at the show. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

He adds how some ancient inscriptions still hold mankind in their thrall, especially the Indus script which remains undeciphered. "This line of thought excited me no end and I began studying various scripts such as Pali, Brahmi and Chinese as well as symbolism in other cultures. Each script is beautiful, complex and complete in itself. You can put it on a pedestal or frame it. Not just phrases or a word; each basic character is a complete aesthetic form."

**Scripts and the man**

It is not surprising then, that Amitabh crafted his own script, the characters of which are seen in the Inscription series. He says sometime in the '90s he used a few characters from the Brahmi script on one of his canvases.

"I used bold hues of brass and black, and though it was an alphabet, to me, it was a form – much like a tree or the human figure. That got me started on the idea of creating my own script," says the artist.

"Eventually, they became a symbolic abstract with colours, lines and textures. As they are a creation of my own making, they have no historical reference and are not meant to be read or understood. They are abstract, universal and timeless."

His fascination seems boundless, which is remarkable given his age. He continues, "Even today, how we interpret script has evolved, how we write has changed. Apart from the invention of the press and printing technology, different forms, styles and fonts are constantly developing," he says, adding that his characters are a symbolic form of script.

**NGMA**

Apart from the show at Gallery Time and Space, a retrospective on Amitabh is ongoing at the National Gallery of Modern Art (NGMA) in the city.

"There are around 134 works of mine on display at NGMA – from my early student days in Paris, to the Delhi and Nigerian periods, as well as those from the later Indian periods," he says, adding that it spans his entire oeuvre.

"A few of my sculptures are also being shown at the retrospective, which gives one an idea of the styles, techniques and media I have employed over the years. One can get an idea of my disposition from my works at the show."

*Shared Echoes will be on at Gallery Time and Space till May 18. Entry free. Mondays closed.*

# *Propagating traditional crafts*

**Shilpa Anandraj**

Bangalore Dastkar Bazaar 2025, in the city later this month, will feature crafts, workshops, cultural events and food. "It is aimed at celebrating culture, cuisines and crafts of India," says Shelly Jain, Senior Director- Programmes Project and Personnel, Dastkar, over a call from Delhi.

Dastkar bazaar brings over 160 craft groups from across 25 states of India, with a mix of products, traditions and skills, including third-and fourth generation craftsmen and some award winning artisans.

Textiles include cotton Jamdani, soof, aari, kantha, batik, bandhani, indigo block-printing and more.

"We have also always been environmentally conscious, looking at promoting sustainable products, so there will be products made from natural material like mat, cane, golden grass and sabai grass," adds Shelly.

There will also be crafts in bell metal, leather puppet, lacquer toys, gourd and wood carving, pottery.

The folk arts section will feature Pichwai, Pattachitra, Bhil, Gond, Kalighat, Tanjore, and Madhubani Painting, while patrons seeking organic products can look to stalls with millet snacks, essential oils, perfumery, flavoured teas and herbal beauty products.

**Creating a bridge** Some of the crafts that will be on display at the bazaar and Shelly Jain. SPECIAL ARRANGEMENT

The Purulia Chhau dance, a masked martial arts dance form Jharkhand, will be presented on the weekend.

Dastkar, was established in 1981, focussing on empowering traditional Indian craftspeople and crafts by bridging the gap between traditional rural artisans and contemporary urban consumers. "We strive to strengthen and support them, act as consultants, trainers, designers, and resource providers to craft groups.

We are bringing 20 new craft groups to Bengaluru this year, including a lacquer bangle-maker, who will demonstrate his work, and an embroidery group from Gujarat."

An added attraction is Karvati saris on tussar, says Shelly. "This craft from Maharashtra is on the verge of extinction. Craftsmen do not want their children to take to this craft due to livelihood challenges. The entire belt in Maharashtra refuses to encourage their youngsters or even pass on the knowledge of this craft. We have started new projects with other group to keep the craft from going extinct."

By encouraging designers to works with craft-persons on Karvati, Shelly says the hope is to create something appealing to people. "With many people choosing not wear saris, the demand has gone down. Those who still wear saris or traditional clothes, the price of handloom is a deterrent."

Crafts-people, Shelley says put in long hours of work to create a fabric. "They too have a family to feed. Unless we work collectively and create a bridge, these aspects will always pose a challenge. The government should also take concrete steps in bettering these issues."

Modernising tools and techniques and shortening the work process, Shelly believes might be the first steps to reviving the Karvati.

"Designers should collaborate with craftspeople to create modern garments that everyone would want to wear. We need to look at not just sustaining the crafts, but also how we can keep the craft-person's dream of giving their child an education."

Children trained in the family crafts, end up giving up on formal education, Shelly says as they take to the family business at a tender age.

"Despite these challenges, I have noticed a growing interest in funky, modern designs in the crafts. We see this more in Delhi, while Bangaloreans veer towards the traditional as they are aware of its heritage. This is one reason why many crafts-people are keen to return to Bengaluru. This city embraces crafts and respects the artisans' works, which boosts the artisan's morale."

The bazaar will include workshops in Madhubani, Gondh and clay modelling for children.

"We also have waste paper craft, which aims at teaching craftsmanship with sustainability. Though we have a free entry, we charge a token amount for the workshops," says Shelly, who has been with Dastkar for over two decades.

With a national reach encompassing over 700 craft groups and small producers across 25 Indian states, Shelly says Dastkar achieves its missions through collaborative efforts with governmental, non-governmental, and foreign agencies, serving as an advisor, resource person, and incubator for craft groups.

## Trash to treasure

This summer vacation, Museum of Art & Photography (MAP) in Bengaluru is offering a workshop titled 'Scrappy Puppet Tales', from May 19 to May 24. This six-day summer camp, held daily between 11am and 4pm at HDFC Learning Centre on MAP's lower ground floor, is designed especially for children aged nine to 12.

The workshop will be led by actor, poet, and puppeteer Padmavati Rao, whose theatre and film career spans nearly five decades.

Passionate about working with children, she brings her vast experience in storytelling and puppetry to the classroom, promising participants a unique, enriching experience.

Over the course of the week, children will get hands on with scrap materials, transforming everyday junk into imaginative puppet characters. From bottle caps to fabric scraps, nothing is off limits in this playful creative process. The camp concludes with a grand finale showcase, where each young artist will present his/her puppet creation on stage, allowing their characters to come alive before an audience.

Puppetry is one of the oldest forms of storytelling, with traditions found in cultures across the globe, from the shadow puppets of Indonesia to the marionettes of Europe. Puppets have entertained, educated and even challenged audiences for centuries. By making and performing with puppets, children not only exercise creativity but also develop fine motor skills, storytelling abilities, and self-confidence.

*Registration for 'Scrappy Puppet Tales' is priced at ₹1,050, and slots are limited.*

*For details and to book a spot, visit map-india.org.*

# Will issue documents to those living in *tandas*, *hattis*: DKS

Karnataka Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar and others taking an oath during the 'Yuva Parva' event at Ramanagara on Sunday.

**The Hindu Bureau**
BENGALURU

The State government will issue *patta* to those holding properties in *tandas*, *hattis*, and other revenue land, which will help about a lakh people, during the second anniversary celebration of the government.

"The Congress has adhered to its promise after coming to power. It has implemented Yuva Nidhi, Shakti, Gruha Lakshmi, and Gruha Jyothi schemes. Have the Janata Dal (Secular) and the BJP given such programmes?" wondered Deputy Chief Minister D.K. Shivakumar during the 'Yuva Parva' convention at Ramanagara on Sunday. He said that providing of the *pattas* during the Vijayapura convention, likely to be held on May 20, would benefit about one lakh people living in *tandas*, *hattis* and other revenue land. "Unlike those coming for publicity from outside to Ramanagara, we have given several programmes, including schools, hospitals, and land," he said.

Stating that the Youth Congress was a training school to build future leaders, he asked the Youth Congress cadre not to be afraid of criticism and to work at the grassroots. "Power is not permanent. The BJP, JD(S) and Congress are also not permanent. In politics, everything is momentary, including my election as MLA eight times and the Prime Minister's (Narendra Modi) election thrice. The seat vacated by former Prime Minister H.D. Deve Gowda in Ramanagara was won by Congress leader C.M. Lingappa against actor M.H. Ambareesh." He said the Congress won 40 seats in the Old Mysore region, and the party was striving to win the seats it had lost in the next election. "Have we not won in Mandya, Ramanagara, Mysuru, and Mandya?" he asked.

Stressing the importance of the growth of leaders at the grassroots level, he said Jawaharlal Nehru, Kengal Hanumanthaiya, C. Rajagopalachari, and B.D. Jatti had become big leaders after emerging at the grassroots.

# Kerala decides to challenge Waqf Act in Supreme Court

The State govt. will initiate proceedings for impleading in the case later this week, legal sources say; Kerala views the Act as a transgression on constitutionally guaranteed freedoms, they add

**K.S. Sudhi**
KOCHI

The Kerala government has made up its mind to challenge the constitutional validity of the Waqf (Amendment) Act, 2025 in the Supreme Court.

The government has issued instructions to its legal officers to file an impleading petition in the vourt, Law Minister P. Rajeeve said.

The State government had been dilly-dallying on the question of opposing the legislation in the top court even as several BJP-led State governments had impleaded in the case with the prayer to protect the recently passed legislation by the Centre.

**In protest:** People attend a meet held by the Jamiyyathul Ulama Coordination Committee in Kochi on the Waqf law. THULASI KAKKAT

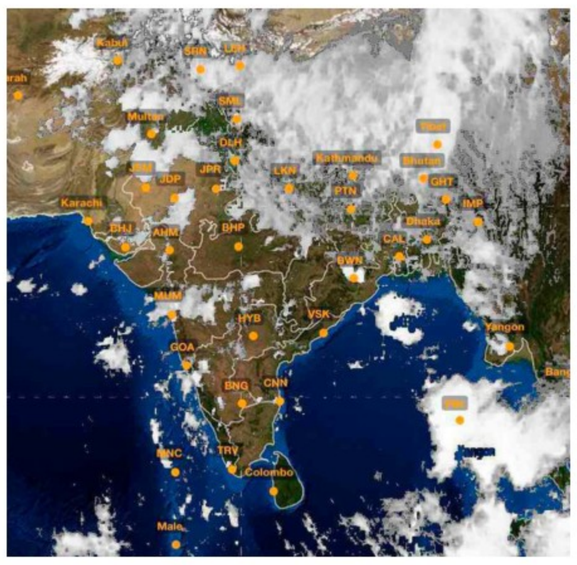
Kerala will initiate the proceedings for impleading in the case later this week, legal sources indicated.

The State will oppose the Act by contending that it violated some of the constitutional provisions and values. Kerala views the Act as a transgression on the constitutionally guaranteed freedom of religious denominations to establish and maintain institutions for religious and charitable purposes, manage their affairs in matters of religion, own and acquire moveable and immoveable property, and administer such property by law, sources said.

A unanimous resolution passed by the State legislature on October 14 last year asked the Centre to drop the amendments as the legislators felt that the amendments violated the tenets of federalism and weakened the functioning of the State Waqf Boards and the Waqf Tribunals.

## WEATHERWATCH

Rainfall, temperature & air quality in select metros yesterday




TEMPERATURE DATA: IMD, POLLUTION DATA: CPCB, MAP: INSAT/IMD (TAKEN AT 17.00 HRS)

**Forecast for Monday:** Heavy rainfall very likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Assam, Meghalaya, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura. Thunderstorm accompanied with lightning very likely at isolated places over Arunachal Pradesh, Karnataka, Lakshadweep, Nagaland, Manipur, Mizoram and Tripura.

| CITY | RAIN | MAX | MIN | CITY | RAIN | MAX | MIN |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Agartala | 2.0 | 38.5 | 27.8 | Kozhikode | — | 35.5 | 26.5 |
| Ahmedabad | — | 36.0 | 27.6 | Kurnool | — | 40.2 | 28.9 |
| Aizawl | 1.0 | 32.3 | 22.1 | Lucknow | — | 40.9 | 27.0 |
| Allahabad | — | 42.5 | 29.0 | Madurai | 5.0 | 40.0 | 24.6 |
| Bengaluru | 0.1 | 33.2 | 23.0 | Mangaluru | — | 33.8 | 25.3 |
| Bhopal | — | 38.4 | 25.4 | Mumbai | 13.0 | 33.2 | 25.0 |
| Bhubaneswar | — | 40.2 | 26.0 | Mysuru | — | 34.2 | 19.6 |
| Chandigarh | — | 38.9 | 22.7 | New Delhi | 2.2 | 35.1 | 23.1 |
| Chennai | — | 37.7 | 26.6 | Patna | — | 40.7 | 29.4 |
| Coimbatore | — | 36.8 | 23.4 | Port Blair | — | 33.1 | 26.2 |
| Dehradun | 32.0 | 35.4 | 19.6 | Puducherry | — | 35.8 | 28.4 |
| Gangtok | 14.0 | 23.1 | 15.2 | Pune | — | 35.6 | 24.5 |
| Goa | — | 33.9 | 25.7 | Raipur | — | 41.0 | 29.1 |
| Guwahati | 19.0 | 31.2 | 20.7 | Ranchi | 3.0 | 37.0 | 22.6 |
| Hubballi | — | 35.0 | 23.0 | Shillong | — | 25.1 | 19.0 |
| Hyderabad | — | 38.9 | 27.3 | Shimla | 5.2 | 25.2 | 14.6 |
| Imphal | 4.4 | 27.7 | 21.3 | Srinagar | — | 25.7 | 13.2 |
| Jaipur | — | 40.0 | 27.2 | Thiruvananthapuram | — | 35.0 | 24.8 |
| Kochi | — | 33.4 | 26.0 | Tiruchi | — | 39.5 | 27.0 |
| Kohima | — | 22.0 | 17.2 | Vijayawada | — | 40.0 | 27.4 |
| Kolkata | — | 39.4 | 29.7 | Visakhapatnam | — | 35.7 | 28.1 |

*(Rainfall data in mm; temperature in Celsius)*

**Pollutants in the air you are breathing**

| CITIES | $SO_2$ | $NO_2$ | CO | PM2.5 | PM10 | CODE |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| Ahmedabad | 7 | 82 | 8 | 101 | 110 | |
| Bengaluru | 8 | 2 | 19 | 33 | 106 | |
| Chennai | 6 | 5 | 34 | 50 | 87 | |
| Delhi | 17 | 43 | 34 | 170 | 118 | |
| Hyderabad | 9 | 46 | 46 | 40 | 84 | |
| Kolkata | 10 | 29 | 27 | 105 | 102 | |
| Lucknow | 9 | 38 | 27 | 79 | 159 | |
| Mumbai | — | 1 | 36 | 77 | 98 | |
| Pune | 42 | 10 | 100 | 233 | — | |
| Visakhapatnam | 10 | 38 | 31 | 63 | 95 | |

**Yesterday**

In observation made at 4.00 p.m., Agarthala, Tripura recorded an overall air quality index (AQI) score of 336 indicating an unhealthy level of pollution. In contrast, Madikeri, Karnataka recorded a healthy AQI score of 22.

**Air Quality Code:** Poor Moderate Good (Readings indicate average AQI)

**$SO_2$:** Sulphur Dioxide. Short-term exposure can harm the respiratory system, making breathing difficult. It can affect visibility by reacting with other air particles to form haze and stain culturally important objects such as statues and monuments.

**$NO_2$:** Nitrogen Dioxide. Aggravates respiratory illness, causes haze to form by reacting with other air particles, causes acid rain, pollutes coastal waters.

**CO:** Carbon monoxide. High concentration in air reduces oxygen supply to critical organs like the heart and brain. At very high levels, it can cause dizziness, confusion, unconsciousness and even death.

**PM2.5 & PM10:** Particulate matter pollution can cause irritation of the eyes, nose and throat, coughing, chest tightness and shortness of breath, reduced lung function, irregular heartbeat, asthma attacks, heart attacks and premature death in people with heart or lung disease

# BJP men ransack Karachi Bakery in Hyderabad, demand name change

**Strained scene:** A view of the Karachi Bakery in Hyderabad. The police have booked BJP workers for attacking the shop. FILE PHOTO

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

A group of BJP workers on Saturday ransacked Karachi Bakery in Shamshabad in Hyderabad.

A police official said 10 to 15 party workers staged a protest over the name of the bakery, demanding that it be changed.

"Around 3 p.m., the people tried to break the name board and destroyed other items in the bakery," the official said.

The attack took place after a ceasefire was announced by the two countries. No one was injured in the attack.

A case was booked against the group for wrongful restraint and damaging property.

Earlier this week, the bakery had clarified that the brand was founded in Hyderabad in 1953 and that the name is part of its history.

# Excise team seize hashish oil, marijuana in Hyderabad

**The Hindu Bureau**
HYDERABAD

The Special Task Force (STF) of the Excise Department has seized 300 grams of hashish oil and over a kilogram of marijuana in two separate raids conducted in Hyderabad.

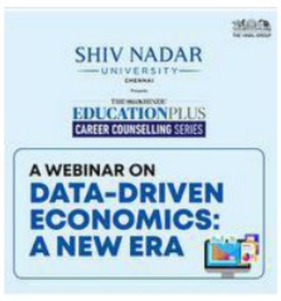
Meanwhile, Shamshabad excise officials seized non-duty paid liquor worth ₹4 lakh during a raid on a function at a farmhouse in Moinabad.

In the first operation, the STF team raided Ayodhya Nagar in Quthbullapur on a tip-off and recovered 300 grams of hashish oil, valued at ₹3 lakh.

In a separate raid, the STF team also seized 1.212 kg of marijuana from Dhoolpet.

# Importance of data discussed at *The Hindu* Education Plus Career Counselling webinar

**The Hindu Bureau**
CHENNAI




As a part of *The Hindu* Education Plus Career Counselling Series, a webinar titled 'Data-Driven Economics: A New Era' was organised in collaboration with Shiv Nadar University, Chennai.

During the webinar, experts discussed the rising importance of data in shaping contemporary economic thought.

According to a press release, Pushpa Trivedi, senior professor and head of the Economics Department at the School of Science and Humanities, Shiv Nadar University, Chennai, explained various forms of data and emphasised the value of integrating economics with data science in academic programmes.

"Traditionally, theory comes first, followed by analysis and conclusions. But today, with the abundance of data, sometimes theories can emerge directly from data patterns," she said.

Soumyadip Roy, associate professor and incharge director at UNext Manipal Academy of BFSI, Bengaluru, spoke about the growing role of data in today's world.

"In the way the world is evolving, working with data is no longer optional – it is an essential skill," he said.

Mr. Roy, while speaking about the future of jobs in the BFSI sector and the influence of AI, said, "It is a blend of multiple disciplines, but there is still a crucial need for the human element." He also stressed that graduates must combine technical skills, domain expertise, and effective communication to stay relevant in the industry, the press release added.

# Malappuram woman affected by Nipah remains on ventilator support

**The Hindu Bureau**
MALAPPURAM

The condition of a 42-year-old woman from Valanchery in Malappuram district of Kerala affected by the Nipah virus remained unchanged on Sunday. She remained in a coma on ventilator support in the intensive care unit of E.M.S. Memorial Hospital, Perinthalmanna.

She was given two doses of monoclonal antibodies and other medicines as part of the State's Nipah treatment protocol. "Her condition remains stable, with neither improvement nor deterioration," District Medical Officer R. Renuka said.

State Health Minister Veena George said that 11 more people on the contact list of the affected woman tested negative on Sunday, bringing the total number of people who have tested negative for Nipah to 42. As many as 18 more persons were included on the contact list on Sunday, raising the total number on the list to 112.

**High precaution:** Eighteen more persons were included on the contact list on Sunday, raising the total to 112. K. RAGESH

As many as 81 of them were from Malappuram district, 25 from Palakkad, three from Kozhikode and one each from Ernakulam, Idukki and Thiruvananthapuram. Ten of them have been under treatment for various ailments, and two of them have been admitted to the intensive care unit.

The Minister reviewed the Nipah situation through an online meeting in which top health officials in the State attended on Sunday evening.

**Fever surveillance**

Trained health officials visited 2,087 houses in and around Valanchery on Sunday as part of the ongoing fever surveillance. They have covered 87% of the houses in the area, visiting a total of 3,868 houses so far.

The Health Department will launch a joint outbreak investigation with the support of the Animal Husbandry Department on Monday. A surveillance of domestic animals in the region will begin on Monday.

# Group flags Lakshadweep islanders' mounting woes over travel to mainland

**The Hindu Bureau**
KOCHI

The Lakshadweep Passengers' Welfare Association has sought steps to end the acute connectivity issues between the islands and the mainland, by augmenting the fleet of ships that had been made available for the purpose.

The association expressed concern at the Lakshadweep administration's 'priority change' during the past five years from the shipping sector to non-priority areas, with the result that the islanders are left with just a handful of ships for commute.

Ships are the only lifeline for the islanders, but only two of them run services now.

The group of 10 inhabited and 26 uninhabited islands are located between 220 km to 440 km from the mainland, making ships the lifeline for the islanders.

The association said the daily life of the islanders revolved around the regular ship services to the mainland. The administration had been taking care of all the travel and cargo needs of the islanders, until its priority shifted from the crucial shipping sector to non-priority sectors a few years ago.

The number of ships in operation got reduced from seven to three in 2022 and two in 2025.

# Long out of power, Cong. in Kerala bets big on new KPCC chief Sunny Joseph

**Hiran Unnikrishnan**
KOTTAYAM

On Sunday morning, Peravoor MLA Sunny Joseph visited the St. George Orthodox Church in Puthuppally, where he offered prayers at the tomb of the late Oommen Chandy – the former Kerala Chief Minister widely revered as the Congress party's most prominent leader from central Travancore.

"I have come here to seek his blessings as I step into this new role," said Mr. Joseph, who is set to take charge as the new president of the Kerala Pradesh Congress Committee (KPCC) on Monday. His visit, accompanied by his new deputies – Shafi Parambil, P.C. Vishnunath, and A.P. Anil Kumar – was a familiar gesture of political symbolism. Yet, it also underscored a hard reality: the Congress party is struggling to regain its footing in central Travancore.

Sunny Joseph

With local body elections just months away, the elevation of Mr. Joseph – a Catholic leader with deep roots in the region – is expected to help the party break its long-standing cycle of underwhelming performance in the region. The party counts on leveraging Mr. Joseph's strong rapport with Catholic leadership.

According to Ibrahimkutty Kallar, senior Congress leader and former Idukki District Congress Committee president, Mr. Joseph is likely to garner broad acceptance across the high ranges of central Travancore.

"He has long been a voice for the region's high-range farmers and has an in-depth understanding of complex land issues in Idukki. This could help win back our traditional voters," he said.

Still, the party recognises the challenges ahead. The SNDP Yogam's displeasure over the removal of K. Sudhakaran from the KPCC presidency remains a concern. However, the Congress is counting on the presence of Adoor Prakash, who leads the UDF, to maintain a working relationship with the Ezhava community.

# 'NDA govt. misusing Central agencies'

**The Hindu Bureau**
SRIKAKULAM

The Congress leaders in Andhra Pradesh Ambati Krishnarao and Gadam Venkata Trinadha Rao alleged that the NDA government has been misusing Central agencies such as Election Commission, Enforcement Directorate, Central Bureau of Investigation and other organisations to target Opposition parties in India.

The party organised a protest named 'Samvidhan Bachao Abhiyan', at G. Sigadam in Srikakulam district, on Sunday.

## Fire and ceasefire

### India must not allow third-party meddling in Kashmir

India and Pakistan on Saturday announced an understanding to stop military actions against each other after three days of intense and escalating fighting. It was United States President Donald Trump who first made the announcement of a "ceasefire" between the two countries, and in further statements, American officials have said U.S. Vice President J.D. Vance and U.S. Secretary of State Marco Rubio were in close touch with leaders of both countries including Prime Minister Narendra Modi, 'helping" them arrive at this understanding. The current flare-up was caused by the terrorist attack on tourists in Pahalgam on April 22. Pakistan has used terrorism as an unstated policy. By demonstrating that India can take overt military action against targets in Pakistan in the event of a terrorist attack, the Narendra Modi government has effectively announced a new security doctrine. Pakistan will not be allowed to hide behind deniability and continue to promote terrorism against innocent people. The Indian armed forces performed with stellar courage and professionalism, while civilians in Jammu and Kashmir paid a heavy price in terms of lives, peace and property. The people of Punjab also had to bear the brunt of the conflict. In the midst of the fire, the Modi government underscored a key principle of Indian identity that it is pluralist, multi-religious and democratic, and correctly identified Pakistan's strategy to create communal discord in the country.

Now that a war has been avoided and the conflict been brought to a halt, the Modi government must take stock and share its learning with the people of India and their representatives. The Opposition Congress has demanded an all-party meeting chaired by Mr. Modi and a special session of Parliament. Several other political parties have supported the demand. The Centre can no longer remain silent on key questions regarding developments during the operations, the deaths and the losses. Truth cannot be allowed to be a casualty in war. Recent days have demonstrated significant new turns in geopolitics that have implications for India. China reportedly supported Pakistan's operations. U.S. involvement in the conflict between India and Pakistan is nothing new. But the Centre has to clarify the nature of the current involvement, as it raises concerns about the internationalisation of the Kashmir dispute. The recent days also saw competitive jingoism between the Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and the Congress, which is not helpful. The BJP, which is in power, is accountable and it cannot escape that by raising historical phantoms. For a country to be able to secure itself and prosper, there must be cool-headed thinking among its leaders, domestic political consensus and social harmony, and a respect for professional views as opposed to jingoistic slogans.

## Right to know

### High Courts must be more sensitive to fundamental rights

The Supreme Court of India order on May 9, setting aside the Delhi High Court order directing the Wikimedia Foundation to take down a page on its Wikipedia Internet encyclopaedia, is notable for several reasons. In October 2024, a single judge of the High Court had issued the interim order after Wikipedia users floated a new page detailing the defamation case and a discussion forum in which some users commented adversely on the single judge's order, construing these actions to be in contempt. After a Division Bench upheld the order, the Foundation moved the Court. Subsequently, the Bench of Justices Abhay S. Oka and Ujjal Bhuyan observed that "[e]very important issue needs to be vigorously debated by the people and the press, even if the issue of debate is sub judice before a court" and that the High Court had overreacted to adverse comments of its take-down order in the forum. The Bench's order was limited to the Foundation's appeal over the legality of the take-down order, following on from a similar one in April to set aside an order to remove allegedly defamatory edits on ANI's Wikipedia page. Yet the order is also clear that the right to know is a basic right under Articles 19(1)(a) and 21, casting the case against the Foundation in a light that may have eluded the High Court. While discussing the presumption of contempt, Justices Oka and Bhuyan noted that the right to know controls the people's ability to participate in public development and to access justice.

Since ANI's suit continues, the High Court may consider applying the value of the right to know to the question of the Foundation's intermediary status under the Information Technology Act. The Foundation only avails the technical infrastructure to Wikipedia users, who then operate according to a set of guidelines to maintain the encyclopaedia. The setup allows users to act independently even as the guidelines are clear that Wikipedia will only collect and organise information from other sources, and not develop new theses of its own. Thus, the Foundation caters to the people's right to know by protecting users against reprisals by the aggrieved powerful and by enhancing the quality of their contributions through the platform's democratic apparatus. The right to know and the right to freedom of expression should be upheld before the Supreme Court is involved in each case. As the Justices invoked former Chief Justice of India D.Y. Chandrachud quoting Jeremy Bentham to say: "publicity about courtroom proceedings ... keeps the judge himself, while trying, under trial."

# Why India must get the Caste Census right

**K. Ashok Vardhan Shetty**

is a former IAS officer of the Tamil Nadu cadre and a former Vice-Chancellor of the Indian Maritime University, Chennai

The Narendra Modi government's decision to include caste enumeration in the next Census is one that is bold, transformative and commendable. Counting caste is not capitulation to identity politics. It is a mirror to the lived realities of millions. It marks a vital step towards evidence-based policymaking to build a more just and inclusive India. A nation that refuses to see itself cannot hope to heal itself.

Post-Independence, India attempted to abolish caste while simultaneously pursuing social justice – a textbook example of policy schizophrenia, as the two goals are fundamentally incompatible. The refusal to count caste in the Census was a corollary of the policy of caste blindness. But the Constitution explicitly mandates the pursuit of social justice through reservations in education, public employment, and electoral constituencies – measures that require precise, disaggregated caste data. Although the Constitution uses the term "class", the Supreme Court of India has repeatedly ruled that caste is a valid, and often necessary, proxy for identifying backwardness and has insisted on detailed caste-wise data to uphold reservation policies.

In his 1955 essay, 'Thoughts on Linguistic States', Dr. B.R. Ambedkar denounced the omission of caste tables from the 1951 Census as an act of "petty intelligence". Visibility in data is the first step toward meaningful inclusion. Caste data collection across all major social groups is essential not only for administering reservations, but also for equity-driven planning, targeted policymaking, and tracking disparities over time. Not collecting it has rendered many of India's marginalised communities invisible in official statistics. Worse, a narrow elite of upper castes and dominant Other Backward Classes (OBCs) has entrenched its grip over wealth, opportunity and power behind the smokescreen of caste anonymity. In hindsight, this ranks among India's gravest policy failures.

**A legal and administrative necessity**

Since 1951, the Census has enumerated Scheduled Castes (SCs) and Scheduled Tribes (STs) but excluded OBCs, even though all three groups are constitutionally eligible for reservations in education and public employment. The usual justification, that OBCs lack reserved seats in Lok Sabha and State Legislative Assemblies (that SC/ST have) collapsed with the 73rd and 74th Amendments, which mandated OBC reservation (in addition to SC/ST reservation) in electoral constituencies of panchayats and municipalities. Implementing these provisions requires granular, area-wise OBC data. With the introduction of reservations in education and public employment for the Economically Weaker Sections (EWS) among upper castes (2019), a comprehensive enumeration of all castes has now become a legal imperative.

> Counting caste is a mirror to the lived realities of millions and a vital step toward evidence-based policymaking

India's reservation policy currently operates in an evidence vacuum, leaving it vulnerable to arbitrary demands from powerful caste groups and politically expedient decisions by governments. With reliable caste data, the demands of the Marathas, Patidars, Jats, and others can be assessed transparently and on merit. The limited data we do have reveal deep inequities. According to submissions made by the Government of India to the Justice G. Rohini Commission, just 10 OBC castes cornered 25% of all public jobs and education seats reserved for OBCs, while a quarter of OBC castes secured 97% of the benefits. Shockingly, 38% of OBC castes received only 3% of the benefits, and another 37% got nothing at all.

Hence, caste enumeration is also an administrative imperative – to prevent the elite capture, enable rational sub-categorisation within social groups, and allow a more precise definition of the "creamy layer".

Collection of caste data must go beyond the decennial Census. All periodic government surveys should enumerate OBCs and upper castes alongside SCs and STs. The era of partial counting must end.

**Learning from failure and success**

In 2010, Parliament unanimously resolved to count caste in the 2011 Census. The 1931 Census had recorded 4,147 castes (excluding the then-called Depressed Classes). The Anthropological Survey of India has identified 6,325 castes. But the Socio-Economic and Caste Census (SECC) of 2011, conducted by the United Progressive Alliance-II government, was a debacle. It produced a ludicrous figure of 46 lakh castes and was never released.

What went wrong? First, the SECC-2011 was not conducted under the Census Act, 1948 and lacked legal authority. Second, it was conducted through the Union Ministries of Rural Development and Urban Development with no expertise for handling a complex socio-anthropological survey. Third, its open-ended questions about caste created confusion. Undertrained enumerators conflated castes, aliases, sub-castes, *gotras*, clan names, surnames and broader caste groups. The result was a chaotic, unusable data set. Was it sabotage or incompetence? Either way, a historic opportunity was squandered.

In contrast, in Bihar's caste survey, enumerators were given a vetted list of 214 castes specific to the State, with a 215th option for "Other Castes". The survey was well-planned, well-executed, and showed that a credible caste count is entirely feasible.

**Blueprint for a successful Caste Census**

To avoid repeating the SECC-2011 fiasco, here is what must be done.

First, legal backing. Amend the Census Act, 1948 to explicitly mandate caste enumeration and insulate the process from shifting political agendas.

Second, the right institution. Entrust the exercise solely to the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner of India, and not Ministries that lack domain expertise.

Third, a standardised questionnaire. Use closed-option questions with dropdown menus covering sub-caste, caste (including aliases), broader caste group, and caste-linked surname (optional). Having 'caste' alone as an option can lead to errors since some caste names such as Rao, Naik, Singh or Bhandari span multiple communities. Assign unique digital codes to avoid duplication and semantic confusion (e.g., grouping "Iyer" and "Aiyar" under one code).

Fourth, State-specific caste lists. Develop draft lists in consultation with State governments, sociologists, and community leaders. Publish them online and invite public feedback before finalisation. Use a similar participatory approach for questionnaire design.

Fifth, enumerator training. Conduct region-specific training sessions with mock examples, clear dos and don'ts, and guidance on local caste nuances.

Sixth, digital tools. Equip enumerators with handheld devices that are preloaded with validated caste lists. Restrict data entry to predefined options to minimise human error.

Seventh, representative staffing. To ensure data integrity, deploy enumerators from diverse communities and in areas where they have no conflict of interest.

Eighth, independent oversight. Establish district-level committees to audit samples and monitor data integrity.

Ninth, pilot testing. Run trials in diverse States such as Tamil Nadu, Gujarat, Uttar Pradesh and Assam to refine methodology before nationwide rollout.

In every Census since 1951, the Government has successfully enumerated nearly 2,000 castes and tribes under the SC/ST categories. Counting the remaining 4,000-odd OBCs and upper castes (most of them State-specific) is not only doable but also long overdue. The delayed 2021 Census offers a rare chance to finally close this data gap. The time for denial and delay is over. The time to get the Caste Census right is now.

# A fundamental reset to drive manufacturing growth

**D.N. Gupta**

is a former IAS officer and currently Adjunct Professor, National Institute of Advanced Studies (NIAS), Bengaluru

Global manufacturing and trade is shifting rapidly toward innovation-driven, medium-high- and high-tech products. It is driven by advanced research and development (R&D), technological sophistication, high skills and a complex network of supply chains. In addition, there are the current high tariffs introduced by the United States. It is likely to redefine the manufacturing sector. Irrespective of whether there are tariffs or not, the fundamentals need to be set right. This demands policies that address challenges squarely.

India has a challenge at hand. Realising the criticality of manufacturing in the economy, the country has been making consistent efforts since the economic reforms in 1991 together with renewed efforts using flagship programmes such as the National Manufacturing Competitiveness Programme (NMCP) in 2005 and Make in India in 2014. Multiple initiatives have provided impetus to the electronics, pharmaceuticals and automobile sectors.

A close examination of basic indicators such as per capita value added in manufacturing and productivity provide useful pointers. For India, in 2023, the per capita value added has been $0.32 K (K: 1000) and productivity stands at $8.9 K, while the same figures are $2 K and $32 K, respectively, for the world average, which are significantly high in comparison, as in World Bank data on manufacturing. The total value added for India stands at $461 billion, while that for China is $4,658 billion and the U.S. is $2,497 billion. On productivity linked to R&D and innovation, developed economies lead significantly ($159 K for the U.S., $103 K for Germany); Asian countries such as Taiwan ($79 K), Malaysia ($36 K), and China ($21 K) have moved ahead. Thus, it requires raising per capita value addition to expand and focus on enhancing productivity to be competitive.

**New approach to technical education**

The world over, manufacturing has leveraged R&D, skill development, and progressive university education. In India, engineering educational institutions have played an important role. Still, in response to emerging needs, there is a need to institute changes to advance innovation. There is a need to look at basic features such as how students are selected for admission, which laboratories and workshops are set up in departments, and which skills for medium- and high-tech manufacturing processes are imparted.

> With global events likely to redefine the manufacturing sector, the focus must be on technical education, core engineering and innovation

It should begin with the entrance examination. There is a need to move beyond the notion of how tough an entrance examination is. It should encourage interest in fundamental knowledge, creativity and problem-solving skills. During graduation, an over-reliance on heavy academic inputs, a culture of notes, and a focus on the 10-point grade take up most of the time and the energy of students, which should be also spent on creative problem solving. At the end of graduation, they are good at solving problems quickly that have defined contours or proven concepts. But there is also the need for an ability to visualise bigger engineering problems and undertake innovation, which demand higher-order thinking and research skills. The focus should be on the application of science and technology in solving industry problems. There should be more weightage (50%) given to practical work. This demands the development of advanced laboratories and workshops, which include tool rooms to impart skills for different manufacturing processes and product design and development. Assembly lines for select products should be set up for R&D.

**Building core engineering**

Semiconductor, information technology (IT), and artificial intelligence (AI) are of strategic importance. These are needed on the top of engineering systems. However, let us not get bogged down with AI and IT. These are imperative, but engineering is much bigger. Core engineering is a must. We need strong engineering skills in core streams such as civil, mechanical, automobile, production, electrical, electronics, chemical, metallurgy, textiles, and biotechnology.

There is a need in the country to have robust engineering units to build equipment and machinery first and then a focus on technical and management capabilities to develop a variety of products, infrastructure, and transportation systems at a much higher speed for different terrain - the plains, mountains, deserts, and oceans. It will necessitate big engineering and R&D infrastructure with a sophisticated supply chain.

**Ecosystem for innovation**

The success of the Silicon Valley in the U.S. is attributed to the innovation ecosystem, marked by high-skilled manpower and R&D infrastructure. Many East Asian countries have benefited from policies for the creation of an innovation system and industrial infrastructure. If one looks at the success of startups in the country, it is due to the existing ecosystem, mainly in the service sector. Similarly, an industrial ecosystem needs to be created for manufacturing, which will need more capital and entail a multi-pronged systemic approach.

State-specific manufacturing parks should be set up with state-of-the-art facilities to plug and play, or quick ways to set up new units. For developing prototypes, in-house capabilities should be created within parks. The facilities for design software, measurement instruments, performance testing and product certification should be provided. Engineering institutes should focus on enhancing R&D and aligning the curriculum with skill development and innovation. Manufacturing startups should be encouraged around engineering infrastructure and labs.

To transform manufacturing, the strategy should include, first, developing advanced research labs and, second, building industrial infrastructure. This will call for raising R&D expenditure from current 0.65% of GDP to 2%, besides additional expenditure of 1% of GDP for industrial infrastructure. Finally, it necessitates a sound policy system to design innovative policies in an evolving global environment.

*The views expressed are personal*

## LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

**'Understanding' and after**

Whether it was due to the efforts of the United States or the sagacity of the leadership of India and Pakistan, the announcement of a ceasefire between India and Pakistan is welcome. No sane person on either side of the border would want a prolonged war between two nations that are nuclear powers.

However, the Indian people need to know whether every objective of launching 'Operation Sindoor' has been achieved and what caused India to accept the ceasefire proposal so readily, when it was reportedly in an advantageous position.

As the Prime Minister has said, "Blood and water can't flow together".

India must have firm steps in place to check terror attacks originating from or that are aided by Pakistan. Else, we will be back to square one, with no bargaining chip, with a hostile neighbour bent upon hurting us in every possible way.

**V. Jayaraman,**
Chennai

**'The Huddle 2025'**

It was interesting to read the reports on *The Hindu*'s The Huddle in Bengaluru. One hopes that the dialogues with eminent people give life to constructive ideas, which the government and society can also analyse.

**J.P. Reddy,**
Nalgonda, Telangana

**Corrections & Clarifications**

The seventh paragraph of a report, "Pak. airbases struck, their troops seen moving to forward areas: govt." ('News' page, May 11, 2025), should have read: Across the LoC, extensive and precise damage to military infrastructure and command control centres and logistic installations, in addition to military personnel, had led to a complete breakdown of its defensive and offensive capability and also Pakistani morale, Colonel Sofiya Qureshi said.

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# The women who remain largely invisible

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**Yukti Choudhary**

International human rights lawyer and researcher specialising in corporate accountability, labour rights, and sustainability

Across India and South Asia, women have long been at the forefront of movements resisting unjust development, extractivism, and climate degradation. They have led protests against destructive mining, dams, and infrastructure projects. Yet, when it comes to decision-making, these women are largely invisible.

From the forests of Odisha to the coastlines of Tamil Nadu, women have led some of the most sustained resistance movements. In Sijimali (Odisha), women continue to protest mining projects threatening their forest-based way of life, often facing police violence. In Jharkhand, Adivasi women in Dewas are blocking coal mining operations to protect ancestral land. In Tamil Nadu, women from fishing communities have been at the forefront of protests against the Kudankulam Nuclear Power Plant. These movements represent a powerful assertion of community-led development and environmental protection rooted in lived realities.

**Leadership not acknowledged**

Despite being central to the resistance, women are systematically excluded from consultations, especially those that claim to uphold free, prior, and informed consent (FPIC). In many cases, community meetings and decisions on land are dominated by men, while women, who bear the disproportionate burden of displacement and environmental degradation, are sidelined. Women's perspectives are also frequently devalued or dismissed as emotional, despite being rooted in acute socio-environmental knowledge.

In Bangladesh's Phulbari, women resisted an open-pit coal mining project, enduring police crackdowns while organising mass mobilisations. In India's Narmada Bachao Andolan, Medha Patkar's leadership brought global attention to the devastating impact of dams. Yet, policies designed in response to such movements have often remained blind to the gendered impacts of displacement and rehabilitation.

Legal frameworks in South Asia do exist to protect women's land rights – at least on paper. India's Forest Rights Act (2006) and PESA Act (1996) recognise women's role in Gram Sabhas and grant equal rights to forest resources. Nepal's Joint Land Ownership Policy encourages land co-ownership between spouses. Bangladesh prioritises women in land distribution under its Khas land programme. However, these frameworks are undermined by systemic gaps: land titles often remain in the name of male household heads, with women rarely listed as joint or sole owners. Implementation mechanisms lack gender sensitivity, and Gram Sabhas are frequently held in male-dominated settings. Additionally, many displaced women are not counted as heads of households and are thus excluded from compensation.

There is no comprehensive gender-sensitive land policy at the national level in India. State land redistribution programmes often overlook single women, widows, or women without formal documentation. Despite the 2005 amendment to the Hindu Succession Act granting equal inheritance rights, customary laws and local practices frequently override statutory provisions, particularly in tribal regions. The intersection of formal legal barriers with entrenched patriarchal norms leads to a practical erasure of women from land governance processes.

This invisibility becomes even more glaring in the context of climate change. In India and beyond, extreme heat, water scarcity, and environmental pollution are deepening existing gender inequalities. Women walk farther for water, care for sick family members, and work longer for less – all while being excluded from decisions on climate resilience, rehabilitation, or mitigation. Yet, most climate adaptation frameworks fail to integrate women's traditional ecological knowledge or ensure their participation in planning.

While FPIC is increasingly cited in international standards and development finance frameworks, its actual implementation rarely includes gendered perspectives. What use is "consultation" if it takes place in spaces where women feel unsafe to speak? What legitimacy does consent hold if it is given without understanding the long-term ecological and social impacts, or if it is granted by male leaders who don't represent women's interests?

**Need for structural change**

If we are serious about gender justice, climate justice, and inclusive development, this must change. Governments and corporations must ensure that consultations are not only free and prior but informed and inclusive. This means scheduling meetings at times accessible to women, ensuring women-only spaces when necessary, and providing translation and legal aid. It means recognising women as independent landowners, not just as dependents of male household heads.

At the same time, women's leadership within movements must be amplified. Too often, women do the groundwork – organising, protesting, feeding, and sustaining the movement – without having a seat at the table. Movement allies, NGOs, and policymakers must acknowledge and support women's leadership, not just on the streets but in negotiation rooms, legislatures, and compensation boards.

If development is to be democratic, if climate policy is to be just, and if resistance is to be meaningful, the voices of women must not only be heard – they must lead. Their stories are not of victimhood, but of vision. It's time our policies, laws, and institutions reflected that truth.

> Too often, women do the groundwork — organising, protesting, feeding, and sustaining movements — without having a seat at the table

# The twin challenges for the M.P. police

Political intervention and attacks on personnel have dented the image of the police

STATE OF PLAY

**Mehul Malpani**
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Prince Garg, a head constable of the Madhya Pradesh Police, died on Friday, nearly two weeks after a man shot him inside a police station in Satna. Garg is the second police personnel in the State to have allegedly been murdered in the last two months. In March, Assistant Sub-Inspector Ramcharan Gautam was allegedly lynched to death when a police team, which was on a mission to rescue a man held hostage by members of a tribal community, came under attack in Mauganj. The hostage was killed too.

Apart from Garg and Gautam, nearly 10 incidents of attacks on police personnel or a team have been reported in the State in recent months, including in Indore and Bhopal. In Indore, in February, a group of men assaulted and attempted to kidnap a uniform-clad Sub-Inspector during night patrolling. Similarly, last month, Nazar Daulat Khan, a constable of the Government Railway Police, was thrashed by drunken men at Bhopal's Rani Kamlapati railway station at night when he questioned them about drinking in the parking area. The accused also allegedly commented on his religious identity. The incident took place just days after the terror attack in Pahalgam. The charges for alleged communal slurs were only added to the FIR two days later.

Videos of both these incidents went viral on social media. Netizens raised concerns over the vulnerability of police personnel, while the Opposition slammed the ruling BJP over the "boosted morales" of criminals. Chief Minister Mohan Yadav, who holds the Home portfolio, has been under fire from the Congress, which has only intensified its demand that he relinquish the portfolio.

While junior or on-field officers have been the targets of angry mobs, multiple senior officers, including Superintendents of Police (SP), have faced sudden transfers, soon after incidents of communal violence broke out in their respective jurisdiction areas. Recently, Guna SP Sanjeev Sinha was transferred to the police headquarters less than a week after two groups clashed in the city during a Hanuman Jayanti procession on April 13. While the police arrested several Muslims over the next 24 hours, two FIRs were filed in the following days against members of local right-wing outfits, including BJP councillor Omprakash Kushwah, who was one of the organisers. After the clashes, Mr. Sinha had said on record that the procession had been taken out "forcibly and without permission" and that "sloganeering was done in front of a religious place of another community".

Last September, Ratlam SP Rahul Lodha was shunted out overnight, after members of the BJP and some right-wing outfits accused him of "biased action" following alleged stone pelting at a Ganesh Chaturthi procession. Mr. Lodha had refuted the claims that idols had been damaged in the incident. The police had also lathi-charged some right-wing activists and booked about 200 people for vandalism during protests at a police station.

At least three senior police officers The Hindu spoke to exposed multiple fault lines in the overall policing in the State. A senior officer in Ujjain Division says both the police and the government are responsible for the public anger seen in the past few months. "The police remain complacent in containing a situation involving a crowd until it turns violent. You have to deal with a crowd before it turns into a mob and herd mentality takes over," the officer argues.

A retired IPS officer says there is "increasing political pressure" in dealing with cases and claims that this puts "double pressure" on officers. "It's difficult to act in a sensitive matter without offending someone, be it a local politician or a religious figure in the area," he says, while also slamming the "postings recommended by politicians" in their areas.

While political intervention has long dented the image of the police in the State, attacks in public view cause humiliation and lead to lower morale levels among the police, making them look vulnerable in front of crowds.

The retired officer also calls for an increased focus on core policing and training over "being busy with VIP arrangements". "The police are not trained to deal with large mobs or even a group of charged up men," he adds.

He says the image of the police was never great but has only worsened in the past one year. "People in rural areas avoid visiting a police station because of the way they are treated," he says.

# Govt. data confirms massive undercount of pandemic deaths

As per latest data, excess deaths in 2021 were nearly six times more than the reported COVID-19 deaths in 2021, confirming *The Hindu's* analysis done for that year

DATA POINT

**Samreen Wani**
**Vignesh Radhakrishnan**

In 2021, an analysis of excess deaths – the increase in the death tally over expected numbers based on previous years (2015-2019) – shows that the number was nearly six times more than the reported COVID-19 death toll. This was the year when the delta variant of the SARS-COV-2 virus wreaked havoc across the country.

Some States had a much higher multiple than the national average. For instance, the Gujarat government had officially reported only 5,812 COVID-19 deaths in 2021, but the excess deaths were 44 times this tally, the government data reveals. Similarly, the excess deaths in Madhya Pradesh and Uttar Pradesh were a multiple of 19.5 times more than the reported toll.

**Chart 1** shows the total number of registered deaths in India over the years. Over 1 crore registered deaths were recorded in 2021, a 27% increase compared to the previous year. The bump in 2021 is obvious on account of the pandemic.

To estimate the multiple, we calculated excess deaths in 2021 using a three-step method. First, we analysed registered deaths in each State from 2015 to 2019 and extrapolated this trend to estimate expected deaths for 2020 and 2021. This gives a reasonable estimate of the expected number of deaths in these years, if not for an extraordinary event. Next, we compared these expected figures with the actual registered deaths revealed by the newly released data. The difference between the two gave the number of excess deaths.

Most of these excess deaths are likely attributable to COVID-19 – the only major disruptive event during those years. Moreover, pandemic-related restrictions had significantly reduced deaths from other causes, such as road accidents, making it unlikely that non-COVID-19 factors were behind the surge.

**Chart 2** shows India's official COVID-19-related death count published by State governments in 2020 and 2021 compared to the excess deaths calculated based on the recently released reports. While the official COVID-19 death count in 2020 was about 1.5 lakh, about 3.8 lakh 'excess deaths' were recorded the same year. In 2021, while about 3.3 lakh COVID-19-related deaths were officially recorded, there were 21.5 lakh 'excess deaths' (6.5 times more).

*The Hindu* had earlier reported on COVID-19 mortality, and had estimated an excess death multiple of 5.8 times in 11 States, based on the CRS data retrieved through RTI applications and official sources. This multiple was the highest among nations with the most recorded fatalities due to the virus.

**Charts 3 and 4** show the top 10 States with the highest multiple and the possible undercount (excess deaths minus reported death totals) in absolute terms. An analysis of the State-wise data shows that in 2021, COVID-19 deaths could have been undercounted by a factor of 44 in Gujarat, the highest such undercount in the country. That is, there were over 2.5 lakh excess deaths in Gujarat in 2021, whereas the State's official COVID-19 death count for that year was 5,812. In Telangana, the multiple was 18. In Bihar, Andhra Pradesh, and Odisha, the multiple was over 13.

While all over India, over 18.2 lakh deaths, most of them due to COVID-19, were possibly not counted, U.P. has the highest number of such deaths on account of a large population. U.P. could have possibly not counted over 2.6 lakh COVID-19-related deaths in 2021. While the State had 2.8 lakh excess deaths in 2021, U.P.'s official COVID-19 tally for that year was only 14,551 deaths. Gujarat, Maharashtra, and Tamil Nadu had undercounted over 2 lakh covid deaths in 2021, data shows.

## A much higher toll

Data sourced from the Office of the Registrar General and Census Commissioner and The Hindu Centre for Politics and Public Policy

**Chart 1:** The chart shows the total number of registered deaths in India (in lakh)

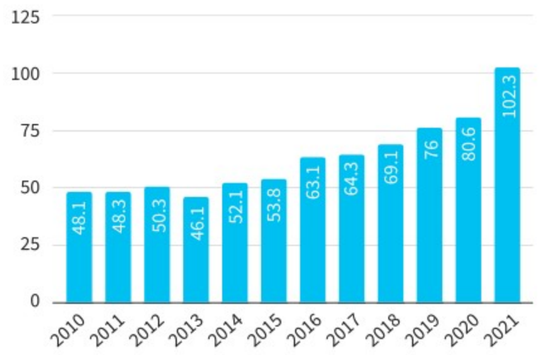



**Chart 2:** The chart shows the official Covid-19 death count and excess deaths in 2020 and 2021 for India as a whole

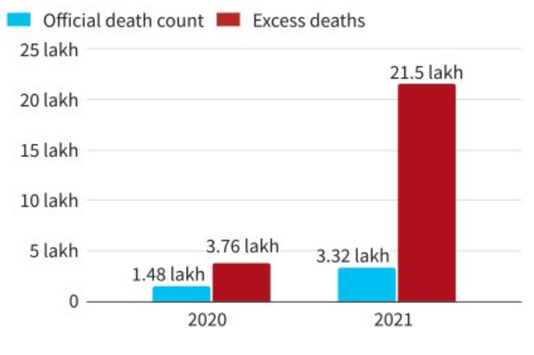



**Chart 3:** The chart shows the top 10 States with the highest multiple of excess deaths over reported deaths in 2021

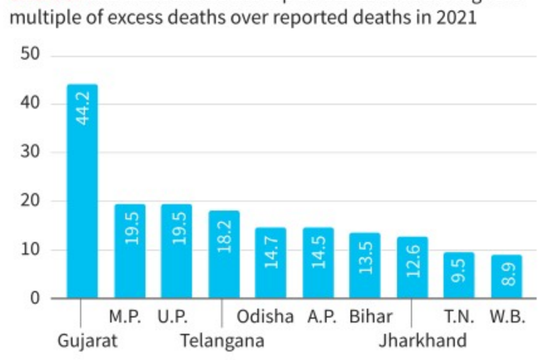
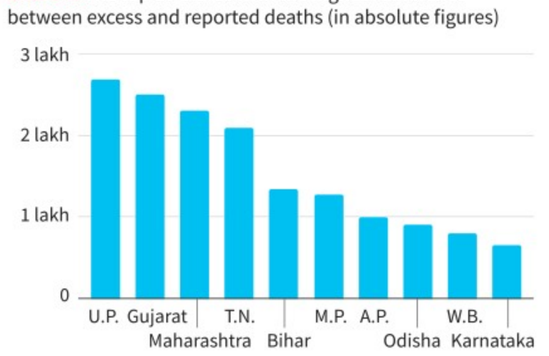



**Chart 4:** The top 10 States with the highest difference between excess and reported deaths (in absolute figures)




*Excess death multiples were calculated for 2021 alone as month wise data for 2020 was not available (a significant number of COVID-19 cases started to be reported only from March 2020)*

FROM THE ARCHIVES
The Hindu.

FIFTY YEARS AGO MAY 12, 1975

## Indian goods popular in Poland

Warsaw, May 11: The oriental charm seems to be at work in Poland where more and more people are buying things from the East and India is getting a large share of the sales.

From cool cottons for casual wear to exotic silk brocades for formal evenings, things Indian are the current rage in a string of "orient" shops that have come up of late in several Polish towns.

These "orient" shops also sell goods from China, Egypt, North Korea and Vietnam, but Poles often choose Indian articles when they go out to buy gifts for birthdays, weddings and other festive occasions.

Buyers and the State trading company, Jubiler, alike speak of the good quality of Indian articles and shop girls in the State stores say expensive items from India get sold as fast as the small knick-knacks.

Dresses made of Indian textiles are popular and embroidered cotton blouses, which need little ironing, have become a particular hit with the Polish girls. Indian textiles are also sold by the metre. Indian agate rings are very fashionable among the youth and necklaces, pendants and trinkets made of natural stones add glitter to many a Polish party.

With handicrafts, imports of Indian tea, pepper and condiments have also gone up and sales of Indian articles meant to be given as gifts, which first appeared in Poland in 1971, doubled in 1973 over the previous year's figure.

A HUNDRED YEARS AGO MAY 12, 1925

## Roosevelt expedition to Central Asia

Bombay, May 11: Col. Theodore Roosevelt, Mr. Kermit Roosevelt and Mr. Syndam Butting, members of the Roosevelt expedition, arrived here this morning by the S.S. "Razmak". The party is leaving for Northern India by the Punjab Mail this afternoon and will join Mr. George Cherrie at Srinagar, thence setting out via Leh for the Russian Pamirs and Chinese Turkistan.

After crossing the Karakorum pass, the party will temporarily split into two. Col. Rossevelt and his brother going through the Russian Pamirs for bigger games including "Ovis Pol" while Messrs Cherry and Butting will take a more eastern route.

From Page One

## Heavy losses inflicted on Pak. military: DGMO

The DGMO said the Army chief had "granted full authority to the Commanders for counter-action in the kinetic domain in case of any violation by Pakistan".

Recounting the sequence of events leading to the "understanding" between the two militaries, Lt.-General Ghai said a message was received from Pakistan's DGMO on the hotline on May 10 seeking clarity on his willingness to communicate. "Since our initial aim was to strike terror camps and all our actions in the subsequent days were in response to the intrusions and violations by the Pakistan Air Force and Pakistan Army, it was decided that I would indeed speak with the Pakistani DGMO," he said.

The DGMOs spoke at 3.35 p.m. on Saturday and it resulted in cessation of cross-border firing and air intrusions by either side from 5 p.m. "We also decided to speak further on May 12 [Monday] at 12 p.m. to discuss the modalities that would enable the longevity of this understanding," he stated.

**'Firm and clear intent to respond'**

He noted that it took only a couple of hours for the Pakistan Army to violate these arrangements, followed by drone intrusions across the expanse of the western front from Saturday night to the early hours of Sunday, he said. "These violations were responded to robustly and dealt with as they must be," the officer said, adding that a hotline message was sent highlighting their violation and India's "firm and clear intent to respond to these fiercely and punitively, if repeated tonight or later."

The senior officers of the three services observed that it was the massive retaliatory attack by India, which targeted several Pakistani air bases on Saturday morning that prompted Pakistan to reach out for the understanding.

The nights of May 7, 8, and 9, besides the morning of May 10, saw massive strikes by Pakistan using drones, missiles and Unmanned Combat Aerial Vehicles (UCAVs) targeting civilian and military locations across the western border. India's air defences had shot down most of the incoming threats while Indian armed forces also launched counter-strikes on military installations in Pakistan.

**Full combat readiness**

On the Navy's role, Vice-Admiral A.N. Pramod, Director-General Naval Operations (DGNO), said in the aftermath of the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22, the "Carrier Battle Group, surface forces, submarines and aviation assets were immediately deployed at sea with full combat readiness, in concert with the joint operational plan" of the Indian defence forces.

"The forward deployment of the Indian Navy compelled Pakistani naval and air units to be in a defensive posture, mostly inside harbours or very close to their coast, which we monitored continuously," the DGNO said, adding that they maintained seamless Maritime Domain Awareness throughout and were entirely aware of the location and movement of Pakistani units.

Military and government officials stated that Operation Sindoor is "still ongoing" as the operational alert continues. Sources in the know said that since the launch of Operation Sindoor, the message of "If you hit, we hit and if you stop, we stop" has been very clear. "With every round of military exchange, things grew worse for Pakistan and on May 10, Indian armed forces devastated eight Pakistani military bases after which they reached out offering to stop firing," they said.

*(With PTI inputs)*

## Displaced people hope to return home in J&K

Around 500 people had to take refuge at multiple centres, including two schools in Baramulla, after the Pakistan Army resorted to heavy shelling. Scores of children who missed school were excited to rejoin their school.

Poonch district in the Jammu region had borne the brunt of Pakistan shelling. An official said the district police and court complexes sustained damage in the shelling.

Meanwhile, the police urged people to avoid returning to the frontline village. "We are not allowed to return. We are told the area will be cleared first," said a displaced person from Silikote at the Government Women's College, Baramulla, which is serving as a shelter for the displaced population from Uri.

The police said there was risk of "unexploded munitions after Pakistani shelling".

National Conference (NC) leader and Uri MLA Sajjad Shafi said, "Unexploded shells are from Dachi to Kamalkote and Duwalta to Garkote in Uri."

**'Kashmir cries out for peace'**

Former J&K Chief Minister and Peoples Democratic Party president Mehbooba Mufti visited Salamabad near the LoC. "Our wounded lie in hospitals. Our families huddle in shelters. Our homes are reduced to rubble. This is why Kashmir cries out for peace, not war," Ms. Mufti said.

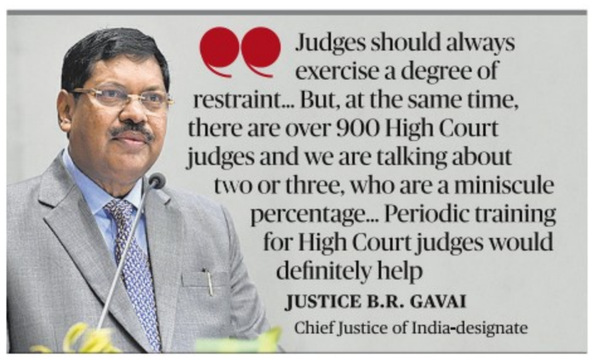
She said those who beat the drums of war don't hear our children weep. "They don't see our parents breaking under the weight of fear and loss. We need homes, not bunkers. We want our children to grow and not be buried under violence. The war-mongering must stop," Ms. Mufti said.

In an appeal to Prime Minister Narendra Modi, Ms. Mufti said, "Decision-makers should prioritise dialogue over military escalation. Let us build a future where the children of J&K can live without fear."

# No compromise if somebody hurts dignity of court, says Justice Gavai

Chief Justice of India-designate says 'some other judges would have taken a different view' of BJP MP Nishikant Dubey's comments against Supreme Court and Chief Justice Sanjiv Khanna; he says the NJAC is 'not a bad thing with some tweaks'

**Krishnadas Rajagopal**
NEW DELHI




Chief Justice of India-designate Justice B.R. Gavai believes that trolls who scandalise the court on social media and resort to personal attacks against judges must be dealt with an iron hand.

"I have no second opinions about that. If it is a matter of somebody hurting the dignity of the court, there is no compromise," Justice Gavai, dressed in formals, emphatically conveyed his point to mediapersons invited to his residence for an interaction on Sunday. He said there are times when the Executive has to support the Judiciary in such situations.

Justice Gavai will be the first Buddhist Chief Justice of India. "My father (former parliamentarian and Governor R.S. Gavai) converted to Buddhism along with Dr. B.R. Ambedkar and lakhs of others in October 1956. His family also converted to the faith, and tomorrow is Buddha Purnima," Justice Gavai told *The Hindu* over the telephone later in the evening. He will be sworn in as the 52nd Chief Justice of India on May 14, exactly a month after Ambedkar Jayanti.

Asked during the interaction about the "campaign" against judges, in reference to the recent derogatory comments made by BJP MP Nishikant Dubey against the Supreme Court and Chief Justice of India Sanjiv Khanna, Justice Gavai said "some other judges would have taken a different view" of the MP's comments.

Chief Justice Khanna, in an order, found the comments amounted to contempt of court but restrained from initiating any action, saying it was not worth it. Agreeing that the MP's comments against the court and the CJI were indeed contemptuous, Justice Gavai however said reactions "depend from person to person".

Justice Gavai found criticism that the Supreme Court was using its powers under Article 142 of the Constitution as a "missile" quite unwarranted. "No, we do not do that," he stressed. Vice-President Jagdeep Dhankhar had dubbed Article 142 a "nuclear missile" shortly after a top court judgment fixed timelines for the President and Governors to clear pending Bills.

Justice Gavai said High Court judges should exercise restraint and refrain from making untoward or distasteful comments inside and out of the courtroom. Periodic training for High Court judges would definitely iron out the rough patches in judicial conduct. He said it was a big "no" for judges to speak on *sub judice* issues.

"Judges should always exercise a degree of restraint... But, at the same time, there are over 900 High Court judges and we are talking about two or three, who are a miniscule percentage," he pointed out.

On the recent publication of assets by the Supreme Court judges on the website, Justice Gavai said some judges had "concerns" whether the information would be misused.

"Speaking for myself, I have followed the practice of disclosing my assets to the Chief Justice right from the beginning in Bombay High Court," he said.

**On NJAC**

Justice Gavai said the "National Judicial Appointments Commission (NJAC) was not a bad thing with some tweaks".

He said the Supreme Court Collegium had always taken the government on board while making recommendations.

The CJI-designate said he had personally not seen any "external pressure" being put on judges to decide cases in a particular manner. "Personally, I cannot find anyone doing that to judges... a high constitutional office... I have not seen anyone exert any pressure," he said.

Justice Gavai said the Supreme Court Collegium, in the coming days, would take a call on recommending women judges to the top court Bench. "The Collegium will have to take a call on that," he said. Justice Bela M. Trivedi is retiring on June 9, leaving Justice B.V. Nagarathna as the sole woman judge serving in the top court.

Justice Gavai said he would not accept any post-retirement jobs after his tenure as Chief Justice of India ends on November 23.

On the Pahalgam terror attack, he said, "When the country is in danger, judges cannot stay aloof. We are part of the country. We were stunned when we heard of the incident".

## BJP, ally lead in Assam panchayat election

**The Hindu Bureau**
GUWAHATI

The Bharatiya Janata Party (BJP) and its ally, the Asom Gana Parishad (AGP), are headed for a comfortable victory in the panchayat election in Assam.

Having won 325 of 348 Zila Parishad and Anchalik Parishad seats uncontested, the BJP-AGP combine enjoyed an edge as the counting of votes began at 8 a.m. on Sunday. By sundown, the combine had bagged or was leading in 263 out of 397 Zila Parishad seats and 631 out of 2,192 Anchalik Parishad seats.

**Poor performance**

The Congress and the minority-based All India United Democratic Front bagged or were leading in 46 and 12 Zila Parishad seats, respectively, and 62 and 10 Anchalik Parishad seats, respectively. The Congress fared poorly in eastern Assam, specifically in areas under the high stakes Jorhat parliamentary constituency represented by Gaurav Gogoi.

State Election Commission officials said the counting of votes would continue late into the night.

# Centre grants citizenship to wife of Bengal resident killed in Pahalgam attack

**Shiv Sahay Singh**
KOLKATA

Sukanta Majumdar

The Union Home Ministry has granted Indian citizenship to Soheni Roy, wife of Bitan Adhikari, a resident of Kolkata who was killed in the Pahalgam terror attack on April 22.

After the death of her husband, questions were raised about the nationality of Ms. Roy by a section of family members of Bitan Adhikari.

Union Minister of State Sukanta Majumdar shared the Certificate of Registration of Ms. Roy on social media under the Citizenship Act, 1955.

The document mentions that Ms. Roy was born in Narayanganj in Bangladesh and entered India in January 1997.

Mr. Majumdar said that Ms. Roy had applied for Indian citizenship after her marriage to Bitan Adhikari a long time ago.

**'Fresh lease of life'**

"The Indian government has accepted that application of citizenship. I thank the Indian government. Bitan *babu* was brutally killed at Pahalgam. The Union government has given a fresh leash of life to Soheni by granting citizenship," the BJP leader said.

Bitan Adhikari, an IT employee who was working in Florida, U.S., was killed in Pahalgam in front of his wife on April 22.

The family members of Bitan Adhikari, including his elderly parents, reside at Patuli in Kolkata.

The West Bengal government has announced compensation for the family and distributed the compensation sum between the parents and the wife of the deceased.

Several politicians, both from the ruling party and Opposition, had visited the Adhikari family after the tragedy and assured support.

Of the 26 persons who were killed in a terror attack in Jammu and Kashmir's Pahalgam on April 22, three were from West Bengal. The other two deceased were Sameer Guha, a resident of Behala in the city, and Manish Ranjan from Jhalda in Purulia district.

# India squandered its strategic advantage during the birth of Bangladesh, says Assam CM

**The Hindu Bureau**
GUWAHATI

Himanta Biswa Sarma

The creation of Bangladesh after the 1971 war with Pakistan was not a diplomatic triumph for India, Assam Chief Minister Himanta Biswa Sarma indicated on Sunday.

He said India squandered its strategic advantage during Bangladesh's birth on several counts. These included not securing a corridor wider than the 'Chicken's Neck', the narrow strip in West Bengal's Siliguri region connecting the geographically disadvantaged northeast to the country's mainland, and not ensuring easy access to the Chittagong Port.

He also said India's leadership in 1971 failed to resolve the issue of illegal Bangladeshi migrants when it was in a position to do so.

"India's 1971 military victory was decisive and historic. It broke Pakistan in two and gave birth to Bangladesh. But while our soldiers delivered a stunning battlefield success, India's political leadership failed to secure lasting strategic gains," Mr. Sarma said.

"The creation of Bangladesh is often hailed as a diplomatic triumph, but history tells a different story," he said, calling Bangladesh's creation a strategic triumph but a diplomatic folly.

Mr. Sarma said that despite military dominance, India failed to resolve the vulnerability of the Siliguri corridor by not keeping a part of northern Bangladesh.

**Demographic impact**

"No agreement mandated the return of illegal Bangladeshi migrants. As a result, Assam, Bengal, and the northeast face unchecked demographic change, sparking social unrest and political instability," the CM said.

He lamented that India did not secure access to the strategic Chittagong Port in Bangladesh.

"Five decades later, the northeast remains landlocked despite having birthed a nation through blood and sacrifice," Mr. Sarma added.

# 'Indus Waters Treaty to be kept in abeyance as Pakistan resorted to cross-border terror'

**Kallol Bhattacherjee**
NEW DELHI

India will keep the Indus Waters Treaty in abeyance as Pakistan had resorted to cross-border terrorism, a highly placed government official told *The Hindu* here on Sunday. Operation Sindoor, which targeted nine terror camps inside Pakistan, had created a "new normal" under which India will hit "harder, bigger, stronger" inside Pakistan if cross-border terror attacks continued, the source said.

The source, who was part of the decision-making process behind Operation Sindoor, said that despite the "understanding" of May 10, the Indian counter-terror campaign had not ended, and New Delhi was unwilling to engage in a dialogue with Pakistan as, "There is nothing to discuss at the moment even at a neutral location."

The Indus Waters Treaty has to be modified to "make it suitable for the 21st century requirements of the Indian state", the senior official said, and there would be rapid infrastructure development work in the rivers that were a part of the treaty. "The Indus Waters Treaty was signed in 1960 as a sign of goodwill between the two countries. But Pakistan has actually placed goodwill in abeyance with its use of terrorism against India," the senior official said, adding that the decisions concerning the treaty would be part of a new, uncompromising orientation towards Pakistan.

"There is a new normal now. It is based on this understanding that if you hit us, we will hit you, and we will hit Pakistan harder, bigger, and stronger in response to terror attacks. We have maintained from the beginning that India did not escalate this matter and that it was Pakistan that started it (the escalation of hostilities) with the brutal attack in Pahalgam," the source said.

All gates of Salal Dam on the Chenab river were closed after the suspension of Indus Waters Treaty following Pahalgam attack. PTI

Officials described the selection of targets for Operation Sindoor as a message for the Pakistani deep state and Inter-Services Intelligence, with Bahawalpur, Muridke, and Muzaffarabad seen as "symbols of the Pakistan deep state's ties to cross-border terrorism".

*The Hindu* has learnt that the Indian establishment views the latest India-Pakistan conflict as strictly a bilateral issue with the DGMOs in-charge. The senior government representative ruled out any offer of mediation at a "neutral" location. "What am I going to talk about with Pakistan? The right people to talk are the DGMOs, not political figures," he said.

The source emphasised that India did not consider the May 10 "understanding" as a ceasefire, arguing that Pakistan had been violating the DGMO-level ceasefire of 2021 repeatedly, rendering the exercise unsuccessful. As a result, India considers Pakistan's "entire landscape" as a legitimate target if Pakistan-based terror outfits carried out strikes in India.

## After Misri is trolled, IAS Association backs him

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

After Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri was subjected to vicious trolling on social media on Sunday for announcing on government's behalf a day ago that India and Pakistan have agreed to cessation of military operations, the IAS Association came out in solidarity against the "unwarranted personal attacks" against the officer.

The Indian Administrative Service (IAS) Association posted on X that it stands in solidarity with Mr. Misri and his family.

Mr. Misri's personal account on X was subjected to vulgar comments by users who blamed him for the agreement with Pakistan.

## Drones spotted over Barmer in Rajasthan

**The Hindu Bureau**
JAIPUR

Incoming drones suspected to have been launched from across the International Border were spotted in Rajasthan's Barmer district on Sunday night, prompting the administration to enforce a strict blackout. Residents were advised to stay indoors and switch off their lights.

Barmer Collector Tina Dabi alerted people to "incoming drones" in a message posted on X, while police personnel took to the streets and asked those returning home after closing their shops to switch off the lights of their vehicles.

The district administration refuted reports of the defence forces shooting down a drone near Barmer. "The district administration completely denies all kinds of rumours going viral on social media," Ms. Dabi said.

Blackout continued as a precautionary measure in Jaisalmer, Sri Ganganagar, and other border areas of the State on Sunday night in the wake of Saturday's violation of the understanding by Pakistan. The alert along the border also remained in force.

Normal activities resumed in the western Rajasthan region, with markets reopening on Sunday.

# Normalcy back in Punjab; security forces keep watch

Calm returns to border districts in the State after four days of conflict between India and Pakistan; authorities ask people to resume normal activities; educational institutions set to reopen today

**Vikas Vasudeva**
CHANDIGARH

**Safe routine:** People throng eateries in Amritsar as they resume normal activities on Sunday, the day after India and Pakistan agreed to a ceasefire. PTI

Calm returned to Punjab, especially in districts sharing the International Border with Pakistan, on Sunday, after four days of intense military conflict between India and Pakistan.

While tension prevailed on the intervening night of May 10 and 11 as Pakistan violated the ceasefire agreement, with blackouts enforced in multiple districts, including Pathankot, Amritsar, Ferozepur, Fazilka, and Gurdaspur, the authorities on Sunday morning asked people to resume normal activities and remain calm. Security forces continue to maintain constant vigil.

Educational institutions across the State will reopen on Monday. "Regular classes and examinations will proceed as per the academic schedule," Punjab Education Minister Harjot Bains said.

The Ferozepur district administration on Sunday morning said the situation was peaceful in the area and "work may be resumed as normal". A statement from the Ferozepur Deputy Commissioner's office, however, urged people to refrain from bursting crackers and flying drones. Similar missives were dispatched by the administration of other districts.

Cautious optimism was evident along with some anxiety as people returned to normal activities, and shops and commercial establishments opened.

"Anxiety is bound to be there during the combat, but no one here gets scared. We in the border villages and towns are used to such situations. Though it's good that both countries have agreed to a ceasefire, it's difficult to trust Pakistan. Today (Sunday), there has been a calm in the atmosphere, and most people are back to their routine," Vijay Kakkar, (71), a resident of Ferozepur city, said. Sunil Dutt, a social worker and agriculturist in Dinanagar, close to the border in Gurdaspur district, said life returned to normal on Sunday.

### Two held

The Punjab Police apprehended two individuals for their alleged involvement in espionage activities linked to a Pakistani official posted at the Pakistan High Commission in New Delhi. "Acting on credible intelligence, one suspect was arrested by the Malerkotla Police for leaking sensitive information regarding Indian Army movements to a Pakistan-based handler. Based on disclosures made during interrogation, a second conduit was also identified and taken into custody," Director-General of Police Gaurav Yadav said. "Preliminary investigation revealed that the accused had been receiving payments through online transactions in exchange for classified information. They were in frequent contact with the handler and were involved in channelling funds to other local operatives as per his instructions," the DGP said.

# Indian military punished terrorists and anti-India forces, says Rajnath Singh

**Press Trust of India**
NEW DELHI

Rajnath Singh virtually inaugurates the BrahMos Aerospace Integration and Testing Facility in Lucknow on Sunday. PTI

Under Operation Sindoor, Indian armed forces not only struck Pakistani military bases near the border but their might was even felt in Rawalpindi, where the headquarters of the Pakistani Army is located, Defence Minister Rajnath Singh said on Sunday.

He said the Indian military had punished anti-India forces and terrorists who had wiped off the vermilion of many families through the Pahalgam terror attack.

Speaking virtually at an event in Lucknow to inaugurate a BrahMos production unit, the Defence Minister said Operation Sindoor was not just a military action, but a symbol of India's political, social, and strategic will against terrorism.

Operation Sindoor was launched on May 7 in retaliation for the Pahalgam terror attack.

India and Pakistan on Saturday announced reaching an understanding to stop all firings and military actions with immediate effect.

Mr. Singh said the entire country was congratulating the Indian military for the success of the operation.

"This operation is a demonstration of India's strong will against terrorism and also the capability and determination of the military power," he said.

"We have shown that whenever India takes any action against terrorism, even the land across the border will not be safe for the terrorists and their masters," he said.

Mr. Singh said Indian forces launched Operation Sindoor with the aim of destroying the terrorist infrastructure in Pakistan.

"We never targeted their civilians. But Pakistan not only targeted civilian areas of India but also tried to attack temples, gurdwaras, and churches," he noted. "The Indian Army has displayed valour and courage as well as restraint and has given a befitting reply by attacking many of Pakistan's military bases," he said.

The Defence Minister said the whole world saw the consequences of committing and getting terrorist incidents carried out in India.

"After the Uri incident, our Army entered Pakistan and carried out surgical strikes, after the Pulwama attack, we carried out Balakot air strikes, and now the world is seeing how India entered Pakistan and carried out multiple strikes following the Pahalgam attack," he said.

"Following the policy of zero tolerance against terrorism, our Prime Minister, Narendra Modi, has made it clear that this is the new India, which will take effective action against terrorism on both sides of the border," Mr. Singh said.

# Clarify if govt. accepted third party mediation on Kashmir, says Cong.

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

Security personnel keeping guard in the India Gate-Kartavya Path area in view of tensions on Sunday. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

The Congress on Sunday asked the government to clarify whether it had accepted third-party mediation on Kashmir, a day after U.S. President Donald Trump's announcement that India and Pakistan agreed to a "full and immediate ceasefire", which had preceded any such declaration from either country. The party also criticised attempts to "internationalise" the issue.

The Congress also demanded a Special Session of Parliament where the House's 1994 resolution to take back Pakistan-occupied Kashmir should be reiterated.

Addressing a press conference at the Congress headquarters, party general secretary Sachin Pilot said the "ceasefire" statement was a surprise to all, as this was the first time a third country had made announcements on behalf of India and Pakistan, and questioned the U.S. bid to "hyphenate" the two countries.

"An attempt was made to internationalise the issues between India and Pakistan. This is the first time this has happened," he said, asserting that the government must issue a clarification while taking the nation and all parties into confidence.

"On what conditions the ceasefire has been declared, and what is the guarantee that such things would not be repeated, as there is no credibility left after yesterday's events [violations]? How can we believe them, and what is the guarantee that such developments will not happen again?" Mr. Pilot asked.

"In 1994, Parliament had passed a unanimous resolution to take back PoK. It is time to repeat it," he said, adding that a message that the entire country is united should go across the entire world.

"It should be stated clearly that it is a bilateral issue and no country, including America, should have space to intervene," Mr. Pilot said, adding that India's stated foreign policy was very clear on areas where there was no scope for mediation.

Mr. Pilot said that the Government of India received unprecedented support from all parties and people in the wake of the Pahalgam attack. Prime Minister Narendra Modi should convene an all-party meeting to clarify all these issues, he added.

He further recalled that during the 1971 War, when America had said they were deploying their seventh fleet in the Bay of Bengal, the then government led by Indira Gandhi went ahead and did what was in the supreme national interest. "We remember that government when national interest was supreme."

# Objectives met; losses are part of combat, but pilots are home: IAF

**Dinakar Peri**
NEW DELHI

**Traces of ruin:** A man walks past damaged shops at Lagama in Uri, Baramulla district. IMRAN NISSAR

"We are in a combat scenario, and losses are part of combat," Air Marshal A.K. Bharti, Director-General of Air Operations (DGAO), Indian Air Force, said on Sunday, while adding that the forces have achieved the objectives of Operation Sindoor and all the pilots are back home. The Air Marshal declined to comment at this stage on any aircraft losses on the Indian side. Further, without giving a number, he said that they have shot down some Pakistani aircraft.

"We are in a combat scenario, losses are a part of combat. The question you must ask us is... have we achieved our objective of decimating the terrorist camps? And the answer is a thumping 'yes'. And the results are for the whole world to see," Air Marshal Bharti said in response to a question from *The Hindu* at a briefing on Sunday, if the IAF had lost any fighter jets. "As for the details, what could have been... how many numbers... which platform did we lose... at this time, I would not like to comment on that because we are still in a combat situation. If I comment on anything, it will be only advantage adversary. So, we don't want to give him any advantage at this stage."

"I am happy that you have asked this question," the DGAO said at the beginning of his response. "All I can say is that we have achieved the objectives that we selected and all our pilots are back home."

There have been several reports in the international media and also claims by Pakistani officials of Indian fighter jets having crashed or been shot down by Pakistan during the precision strikes carried out by the Indian armed forces on the night of May 6-7, as they hit nine targets in Pakistan and Pakistan-occupied Kashmir. However, there has been no confirmation or denial of the news by the government so far.

To a question in this regard on May 8, Foreign Secretary Vikram Misri, without denying the claim, said that official information will be shared when the time is right.

To a question on losses on the Pakistani side, Air Marshal Bharti said that their planes were prevented from coming inside our border, so they don't have wreckage but have "definitely" downed "a few" Pakistani planes.

"I have the numbers, and we are getting into technical details to establish it. So, I would not like to put a figure at this time," he stated.

In this regard, Air Marshal Bharti also said that India's air defence systems successfully thwarted a wave of drones, Unmanned Combat Aerial vehicles (UCAV), and missiles launched by Pakistan.

# Trump repeats claim of U.S. mediation, offers help to find a solution to Kashmir dispute

**Suhasini Haidar**
NEW DELHI

> I am going to increase trade, substantially, with both of these great nations. Additionally, I will work with you both to see if... a solution can be arrived at concerning Kashmir
>
> **DONALD TRUMP**
> U.S. President

A day after New Delhi rejected claim by Washington of mediating a ceasefire with Pakistan, U.S. President Donald Trump on Sunday doubled down on the claims while offering to help find a solution to the Kashmir dispute.

"I am proud that the U.S. was able to help you arrive at this historic and heroic decision," Mr. Trump said in a post on the social media platform Truth Social on Sunday, repeating his mediation claim made on Saturday.

Officials briefing the media on Sunday reiterated India's stand and stressed that the negotiations had been done directly by the Directors-General of Military Operations of the two countries, but expressed their helplessness in preventing Mr. Trump from posting his claim.

"While not even discussed, I am going to increase trade, substantially, with both of these great nations. Additionally, I will work with you both to see if, after a 'thousand years', a solution can be arrived at concerning Kashmir," the U.S. President said in his social media post, repeating an erroneous reference to a "thousand years" of conflict between India and Pakistan.

While the Ministry of External Affairs has made no formal comment on Mr. Trump's statements, sources indicated that they were not accurate or welcome.

Former diplomats told *The Hindu* that while it was quite common for the U.S. to make "parallel calls" to Delhi and Islamabad every time there has been a conflict in the past as well, India's three-pronged policy has been firm about not allowing any third-party mediation, ensuring there is no internationalisation of internal matters, and that there is no "hyphenation" with Pakistan. As a result, Mr. Trump's claims of mediating, offering to resolve the Kashmir dispute, as well as equating India and Pakistan as two "great nations", especially on trade, where India and U.S. are negotiating an FTA to double current levels of bilateral trade of $130 billion, while U.S. and Pakistan have bilateral trade of less than $10 billion, violate those precepts, they said.

# Border Security Force constable injured during firing from Pakistan dies

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

**Since Operation Sindoor commenced on May 7, as many as 18 civilians and seven security personnel have been killed**

A Border Security Force (BSF) constable injured during cross-border firing from Pakistan in Jammu's R.S Pura sector a day ago died on Sunday, the BSF said.

Deepak Chimngakham, hailing from Manipur, was among the eight BSF personnel injured in shelling from Pakistan in the early hours of May 10.

Since Operation Sindoor commenced on May 7, as many as 18 civilians and seven security personnel have been killed in heavy shelling and firing from across the border.

"We salute the supreme sacrifice made by BSF #Braveheart Constable (GD) Deepak Chimngakham in the service of the nation; he sustained fatal injuries during cross-border firing along the International Boundary in R.S. Pura area, Jammu on 10 May 2025, and attained martyrdom on 11 May 2025," the BSF posted on X.

Jammu and Kashmir Lieutenant-Governor Manoj Sinha on Sunday paid tributes to Sub-Inspector Mohammad Imtiaz from Bihar, who passed away on May 10. He was among the eight injured personnel,

He also paid tributes to the Army Rifleman Sunil Kumar from Jammu, who was killed in the line of duty in Jammu's R.S. Pura sector on May 10.

## INBRIEF

### Senior Puri Jagannath temple priest suspended for a month

Ramkrishna Das Mohapatra, a senior *Sevayat* (priest) of the Shree Jagannath Temple in Puri, was on Sunday suspended for 30 days over his alleged controversial remarks on his involvement in the consecration of the Jagannath Temple in Digha, West Bengal. The Odisha government had earlier ordered a probe into allegations that surplus timber procured for the *Nabakalebara* rituals at the Puri temple was used to carve the idols at the Digha temple. Although the government denied the use of any leftover *Daru* (sacred wood) from *Nabakalebara* in the Digha temple, Mr. Mohapatra's statement was seen as damaging to the tradition of the Puri temple.

### Woman mauled to death by tiger in Maharashtra

A 65-year-old woman was mauled to death by a tiger in Maharashtra's Chandrapur district on Sunday, a forest official said. The incident comes a day after three women were killed in a similar attack in the district. The victim, Vimala Shinde, a resident of Nagala village, ventured into the forest area to gather *tendu* leaves in the morning when a big cat attacked her, the official said. In an attack on Saturday, a big cat killed three women at the same time in the Sindewahi Range Forest. Meanwhile, a 50-year-old woman was killed by a tiger in the forest of Seoni district in Madhya Pradesh on Saturday, an official said. PTI

# Total Fertility Rate in India remains at 2.0; Bihar records highest count, Bengal lowest

There has been a gradual decline in the share of population in the age group of 0-14 from 41.2% in 1971 to 24.8% in 2021, shows the Sample Registration System report for 2021 released by the RGI

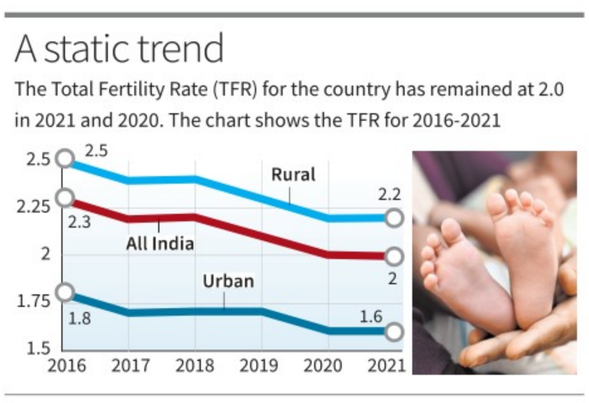
**Vijaita Singh**
NEW DELHI

The Total Fertility Rate (TFR), the average number of children born to women over their lifetime, in the country has remained at 2.0 in 2021, the same as in 2020, shows the Sample Registration System (SRS) report for 2021 released by the Registrar-General of India (RGI) on May 7.

Bihar reported the highest TFR at 3.0, while Delhi and West Bengal reported the lowest of 1.4.

The report said there had been a gradual decline in the share of population in the age group of 0-14 from 41.2% in 1971 to 24.8% in 2021. The "proportion of the economically active population between 15-59 years has increased from 53.4% to 66.2% during the same period", the report said.

The population has gone up from 5.3% to 5.9% for the 65-plus age group and 6% to 9% for the 60-plus age group.




Source: SRS Statistical Report 2021

During the 2024 interim Budget, Union Finance Minister Nirmala Sitharaman had announced a high-power committee to consider the challenges arising from "population growth and demographic changes."

Though the committee is yet to be formed, the announcement suggested there has been "fast" population growth in the country, however the SRS data says otherwise.

A comprehensive pattern will emerge after the Census is conducted, pending since 2021 and which was last conducted in 2011.

As Census is usually counted every 10 years, the SRS is the largest demographic survey in the country mandated to provide annual estimates of fertility and mortality indicators at the State and national level.

The survey was conducted in 8,842 sample units across all States, covering about 84 lakh sample population.

**Elderly population**

Kerala recorded the highest percentage of population in the age group of 60 and above with 14.4% of the total population falling under this category.

Tamil Nadu 12.9% and Himachal Pradesh 12.3% are the other two States with the highest percentage of elderly population, the report said.

On the other hand, Bihar 6.9%, Assam 7% and Delhi 7.1% have the lowest percentage of the population in the age group of 60 and above.

The mean age at effective marriage for females has increased from 19.3 years in 1990 to 22.5 years in 2021.

"It is noteworthy that the replacement level TFR, viz. 2.1, has been attained at the national level, along with Delhi 1.4, West Bengal 1.4, Tamil Nadu 1.5, Andhra Pradesh 1.5, Jammu and Kashmir 1.5, Kerala 1.5, Maharashtra 1.5, Punjab 1.5, Himachal Pradesh 1.6, Telangana 1.6, Karnataka 1.6, Odisha 1.8, Uttarakhand 1.8, Gujarat 2.0, Haryana 2.0 and Assam 2.1," the report said.

# Foreign investors inject ₹14,167 crore in equities this month

**Press Trust of India**
NEW DELHI

India's equity markets witnessed a sharp resurgence in FPI activity in April.

Foreign investors continue to show confidence in the country's equity market, infusing ₹14,167 crore so far this month, largely driven by favourable global cues and robust domestic fundamentals.

Notably, this inflow has come despite the ongoing military tensions between India and Pakistan.

This positive momentum follows a net investment of ₹4,223 crore in April, marking the first inflow after three months, data with the depositories showed.

Prior to this, foreign portfolio investors (FPIs) had pulled out ₹3,973 crore in March, ₹34,574 crore in February, and a substantial ₹78,027 crore in January.

Going ahead, global macros (declining dollar, slowing U.S. and Chinese economy) and domestic macros (high GDP growth and declining inflation and interest rates) will facilitate increasing FPI inflow into the Indian equity, V.K. Vijayakumar, Chief Investment Strategist, Geojit Investments, said.

However, debt inflows are likely to remain very low, he added.

According to the data from the depositories, FPIs made a net investment of ₹14,167 crore in equities in this month (till May 9). The latest flow has helped narrow the outflow to ₹98,184 crore in 2025 so far.

India's equity markets witnessed a sharp resurgence in FPI activity in April, signalling a marked reversal from the outflow seen earlier this year. The momentum continued in May too.

This renewed momentum was underpinned by a blend of favourable global cues and robust domestic fundamentals that bolstered investor confidence, Himanshu Srivastava, Associate Director - Manager Research, Morningstar Investment, said.

# World's longest banana infructescence found in the forests of Andamans

**Shiv Sahay Singh**
KOLKATA

An infructescence of about 4.2 metres has been recorded in a species of wild banana from Andaman and Nicobar islands, making it the longest infructescence recorded in bananas across the world. The details of the discovery were published in an international peer reviewed science journal *Botany Letters* earlier this year.

The infructescence was recorded in an endemic species of wild banana, *Musa indandamanensis*, that was first recorded from a remote tropical forest near the Krishna Nala reserve forest on the Andaman and Nicobar islands in 2012 and found mention in a science journal in 2014.

Initially when the species of *Musa indandamanensis* was discovered on the Little Andaman islands by Lal Ji Singh, head of the regional centre of Botanical Survey of India in the Andaman and Nicobar Island, the infructescence of the specimens were about 3 metres long. Usually, the infructescence (fruit bunch lux axis) of cultivable species of bananas is about 1 metre long, the scientist said.

A specimem of a long banana infructescence at a museum on Andman and Nicobar Islands.

A few months ago, Dr. Singh and his team came across the species of wild banana in Campbell Bay in the Nicobar group of islands, and the infructescence recorded was longer than all other specimens recorded in the past. "*Musa indandamanensis* L.J. Singh holds the record for having the long infructescence of banana in general and wild bananas in particular which is an endemic variety found in ANI (Andaman and Nicobar Islands)," reads the paper published by *Botany Letters* earlier this year.

"Though the length of the trees recorded in 2012 and recently are the same, standing at about 11 metres in height, the girth of the stem of the wild banana trees differ. The species recorded from Little Andamans had girth of less than 100 cm, however the specimens recorded from Campbell Bay had a larger girth of about 110 cm," Dr. Singh said.

**Specimens on display**

After the discovery of the infructescence, specimens have been sent to museums across the country including the Indian Museum in Kolkata, where a 4.2-metre-long specimen has been on display in the industrial section of the Botanical Survey of India for several months. Another specimen over four metres is in the Andaman and Nicobar Regional Centre museum.

Since the species has been assessed as 'Critically Endangered,' as a part of ex-situ conservation of *Musa indandamanensis*, its saplings have been introduced in the Acharya Jagadish Chandra Bose Indian Botanic Garden in Howrah, Botanical Garden of Andaman and Nicobar Regional Centre, and the Central Regional Centre in Prayagraj. What makes the wild banana *Musa indandamanensis* important is the natural genetic resource for plant breeders to develop high-yielding and disease-resistant varieties.

# UGC asks institutions to increase seats, admit more foreign students

**The Hindu Bureau**
NEW DELHI

The University Grants Commission has asked all higher education institutions (HEIs), through a recent circular, to furnish the details of foreign students they have enrolled for their courses.

It advised the HEIs to implement a 2022 circular on creating up to 25% "supernumerary seats" for international students, over and above their total sanctioned enrolment for undergraduate and postgraduate programmes.

UGC Secretary Manish R. Joshi said in a letter to all HEIs that the implementation of the 2022 guidelines will facilitate smooth and viable admission of international students and a favourable environment will be created to make India a preferred destination for international students. Prof. Joshi said in the letter that internationalisation of higher education is one of the essential aspects of the National Education Policy (NEP), and many Indian HEIs are now committed to increasing their global outreach.

The UGC Secretary says internationalisation of higher education is one of the essential aspects of the NEP. SUSHIL KUMAR VERMA

**In letter and spirit**

"Subsequently, in order to facilitate the internationalisation of Indian HEIs, the University Grants Commission has framed the guidelines for admission and creation of supernumerary seats for international student in undergraduate and postgraduate programmes in HEIs in India. The guidelines were circulated earlier by UGC to all HEIs for its implementation on September 30, 2022," Prof. Joshi said, adding that HEIs may create up to 25% additional seats for international students. He urged HEIs to adopt and implement the admission guidelines and provide supernumerary seats for international students in letter and spirit. The objective of the 2022 guidelines was to facilitate a smooth and simple admission process for international students in HEIs, and it allowed Indian HEIs to admit international students based on the equivalence of entry qualification held by them.

**The objective of the 2022 guidelines is to facilitate a simple admission process for international students in HEIs**

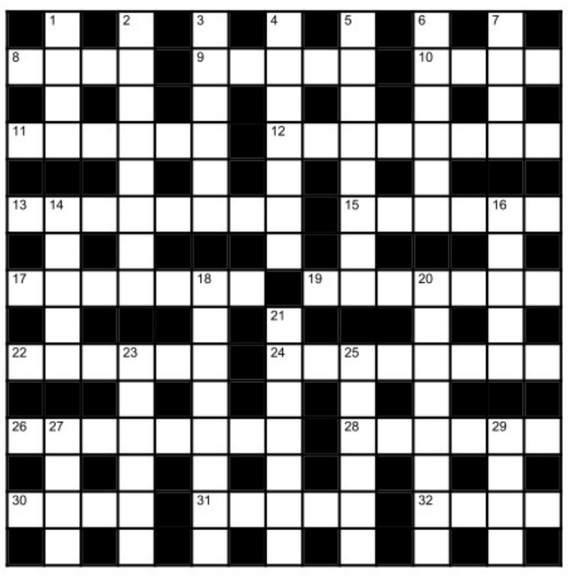
"The equivalence is to be determined by the UGC or any other body recognised by UGC for such purpose or the concerned regulatory bodies of the country. HEIs may adopt a transparent admission process for admitting the international students," the circular had said.

## TH CROSSWORD + 14482

(set by Incognito)

To solve this puzzle online, get across to our crossword site. @ *https://qrgo.page.link/jjpTn*

SCAN TO PLAY



**Across**

**8** French gold for German lady (4)
**9** Musk exported by Spanish city football club (5)
**10** State: "Remove fins from tuna fish and mince" (4)
**11** Old students from Alabama university get consecutive letters before start of internship (6)
**12** Charity criminal boss starts to accept? Turn it over! (8)
**13** Saint has desire to get one tailless fish (8)
**15** Using bands, ties snare inside ship (6)
**17** Save actress and meat vendor (7)
**19** Cigarettes... and pants worn by queen (7)
**22** Indian father retreats with pain (6)
**24** Rate program and set up (8)
**26** Left one foot behind cafe construction for refurbishment (4-4)
**28** Steady and least shaky around top of base (6)
**30** Food item first removed from soft fruit concoction (4)
**31** Lift anchor around one (5)
**32** Assist that chap with record (4)

**Down**

**1** Type of test one may expect during Dental Examination (4)
**2** Recruit moves around military leader's plant (8)
**3** Force old boy to apply gel around top of injury (6)
**4** Ride, surrounded by explosive stuff, to produce missile (7)
**5** A mine gas that turns into a mineral (8)
**6** Disemboweller's drain (6)
**7** Mafia boss's headgear is next to Oscar's head (4)
**14** Partly true... People's representative can be president (5)
**16** City is average at first (5)
**18** Yes, 8 went around in vision (8)
**20** Has Oprah wrongly spelt Egyptian rulers? (8)
**21** Murderer has a point: to become an officer (7)
**23** Little one hugging that lady is an angel (6)
**25** Language Papa has to translate (6)
**27** Very eager, in the past, to go before girl (4)
**29** Small Yankee flower (4)

## SUDOKU

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| | 7 | | | | | 9 | | 3 |
| | | | | 7 | | | | |
| | | 5 | 1 | | 8 | 4 | 2 | |
| | | 8 | 9 | | | 5 | 6 | |
| | 1 | | | | | | 4 | |
| | 6 | 9 | | | 2 | 8 | | |
| | 5 | 1 | 2 | | 6 | 3 | | |
| | | | | 1 | | | | |
| 8 | | 3 | | | | | 9 | |

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DIFFICULTY RATING: ★★☆☆☆

**Solution to previous puzzle**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| A | O | T | S | D | S | K | | |
| S | L | I | P | O | F | T | H | E |
| T | E | N | R | X | O | L | | |
| T | O | E | R | A | G | I | N | T |
| E | N | D | E | D | A | U | P | R |
| E | C | A | S | H | M | E | R | E |
| O | R | D | E | A | L | L | A | S |
| S | S | S | S | P | O | T | T | E |
| D | R | E | D | T | A | P | E | H |
| V | O | E | E | C | A | N | O | L |
| A | P | R | E | S | S | I | N | G |
| R | N | T | X | T | B | U | S | I |
| N | E | S | S | C | H | A | N | C |
| E | R | O | S | O | E | T | O | M |
| A | I | L | C | L | U | B | S | O |
| R | G | Y | L | E | E | T | S | R |
| S | | | | | | | | |

**Solution to yesterday's Sudoku**

| | | | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 4 | 8 | 1 | 5 | 9 | 6 | 7 | 3 | 2 |
| 6 | 2 | 7 | 1 | 4 | 3 | 5 | 8 | 9 |
| 5 | 3 | 9 | 8 | 7 | 2 | 4 | 6 | 1 |
| 2 | 4 | 5 | 7 | 6 | 9 | 3 | 1 | 8 |
| 1 | 9 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 8 | 6 | 7 | 4 |
| 8 | 7 | 6 | 4 | 3 | 1 | 2 | 9 | 5 |
| 9 | 5 | 4 | 6 | 8 | 7 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| 3 | 6 | 2 | 9 | 1 | 4 | 8 | 5 | 7 |
| 7 | 1 | 8 | 3 | 2 | 5 | 9 | 4 | 6 |

## FAITH

### Leading a simple, good life

People may face difficulties and struggles, and their problems may follow them wherever they go. A person may face certain consequences if he becomes an ingrate, fights with elders, or thinks ill of the host who entertained him, allowed him to stay and offered food.

Trichy Sri Kalyanaraman said in a discourse that the Mahabharatha provides apt examples of how various people led pious and straightforward lives. We should show pity and sympathise with our relatives who suffer. Because his brother Pandu's sons lived in the forest, Vidhura chose to stay in a small hut, though he occupied a significant position in the Kauravas' kingdom. Even the grandsire Bhishma, though he lived in the palace, led a simple life. We should not go after name, fame, or money. Only a steadfast and disciplined life will bring God's grace.

Saint Tyagaraja refused to accept a coveted post offered by the king. Swamy Vedanta Desika, who eked out his living by seeking alms, once found a small gold coin in the rice pot dropped by a household, and the Acharya pushed it as a worm. On His mission to Hastinapura, Lord Krishna chose to stay at Vidura's hut, who was excited in great joy, told whether his hut was the milk ocean or the reclining bed of Adisesha or the peepal leaf on which Lord Vishnu rested during the time of great Deluge. Krishna vehemently refused to stay at the palace of Duryodhana, and when questioned, He replied that one could not think ill of a person who offered food and shelter. Duryodhana floated in the air, boasting that he had mustered the support of hundreds of kings to defeat the Pandavas, but failing to recognise that he was bereft of Krishna's support.

## ASKUS

**Vaishali R. Venkat**

**Q** My mother retired last month. After clearing liabilities, she has invested a significant amount in bank fixed deposits for senior citizens. She wishes to keep some money in liquid form but also expects it to grow. Please suggest options.
AKASH SRIVASTAVA

**A** Growth happens only in the long-term. Growth has scope only in equities and mutual funds and that too, only if the time horizon is much longer. Compounding is the key. The power of compounding does magic in any investment only if the money remains invested for at least 15 to 30 years.
In the shorter period, say less than 7 to 10 years, it is difficult to gain good returns or see growth, what with market fluctuations and volatility. It is quite risky for her to invest retirement funds in either equities or mutual funds.
Especially, with the current geopolitical tensions and market volatility, there are chances for loss of capital. Hence, it is better to stay away from these financial instruments.
Your concern is to get higher returns. There are a few corporate bonds that can fetch interest rates of up to 11% or 12%. But investing in those instruments is risky and there is no guarantee of capital protection.
At this age, the priority must be to protect the hard-earned capital and secure a reasonable interest. Therefore, it is advisable to prefer only the conventional methods of investing. When compared with bank FDs, India Post offers a tad higher rate of interest.
It has a Monthly Income Scheme (MIS) with 7.4% interest per annum. You can invest (lump sum) a maximum of ₹9 lakh in a single account or ₹15 lakh jointly, for which you would receive a monthly income of ₹5,550 or ₹9,250 respectively. If monthly income is not needed, she can also invest in the 5-year Time Deposit (7.5%) wherein interest is compounded annually and credited once in a year. There is no maximum limit for investing in them.

**Q** I'm a police constable drawing ₹34,000 salary per month. I'm currently paying Postal Life Insurance policy premium of ₹3,400 per month with maturity in 2038. I feel like closing the policy and taking a term policy and diverting the balance amount to mutual funds. I'm planning to invest up to 15 to 20 years from now. Please suggest the best term policy and best mutual fund.
SUDHEER KUMAR

**A** A postal insurance policy can be surrendered (closed) only if the policy is active currently and that it has been in existence for at least three years at the time of submitting the surrender form. Further, only a few of the Postal Life Insurance policies could be surrendered and not all. So, you need to check if your policy could be surrendered or not.

**Keep invested**
There is nothing wrong in having an insurance policy as it gives life coverage, which cannot be ignored completely. Also, the monthly amount you are investing in the policy is considerably less. So, it is ideal to continue investing in the scheme. Term insurance policy is absolutely necessary, especially, if you have dependents, be it children or parents. As you are considerably young, you can get a decent term coverage with a little monthly payout. Life insurance, term insurance, mutual funds all are different financial instruments with different purposes. They cannot be compared with each other, and you can't ignore one for the other.

**Term policy:** Include critical illness cover, look for a higher claim settlement ratio, choose companies with higher solvency ratio that tells you if the insurance company is financially capable of settling your claim if the need arises.

**Mutual funds:** You can choose any Index fund (passive) that tracks Nifty 50, which are comparatively (not completely) safer. Observe the performance of the fund for one or two years. Once you get the hang of market movements, consider investing in other active mutual funds, which might be risky for a beginner to choose.

*(The writer is an NISM & CRISIL-certified wealth manager)*

**Send queries** on personal finance and investing to the moneywise@thehindu.co.in ID. Our experts in personal finance will respond to select queries, but will not give specific recommendations for investment in a particular mutual fund, share or fixed deposit.

ARTIST SAINATH B.

# The importance of Small Savings Schemes

There is a possibility of the Small Savings rates getting reduced going forward; from that perspective, if you have the money, it is advisable that you lock-in by June

SAVING FOR FUTURE

**Joydeep Sen**

Small Savings Schemes, kown as Post Office Savings Schemes, are a popular and useful means for people for channelising savings. Credit quality is top-notch as it is run by the government, and interest rates are competitive. Interest rates are fixed by the government every quarter e.g. the rates for the current quarter, April to June 2025, were announced on March 31. Today we will see, on what basis the rates are fixed by the government.

> G-Sec yield movements reflect the actual and anticipated events in the economy pertaining to interest rate movement.

**Basis for fixing rates**
As per an old decision of the Government, the rate of interest on Small Savings Schemes will be aligned with Government Security (G-Sec) rates of similar maturity with a spread i.e. mark-up. As an example, the spread on Senior Citizens Savings Scheme will be 1% over comparable maturity G-Secs. The rationale for linking it to G-Sec yields in the secondary market is that it is in line with interest rate movements; G-Sec yield movements reflect actual and anticipated economic events pertaining to interest rate movement.

To clarify the concept, let us say the benchmark G-Sec rate is X% and the mark-up as per formula is Y%. Hence the rate should be X% plus Y%. However, if the rate is higher, say X% plus Y% plus Z%, then Z represents the generosity of the Government for the benefit of citizens. The rates on Small Savings Schemes are reviewed every quarter. However, rates are not revised downward every quarter even when G-Sec rates are sliding, which is the 'Z' referred earlier.

**Prevailing rates**
Post Office Savings Deposit rate is 4%. Public Provident Fund (PPF), which is a 15-year scheme (though can be extended), is supposed to have a spread of 25 basis points (100 bps = 1%). The relevant G-Sec rate (the average of G-Sec of corresponding maturity from December 2024 to February 2025) relevant for the quarter April to June, was 6.85%. By that logic, PPF rate is (6.85 + 0.25= 7.1%) maintained now.

Post Office Term deposits of 1, 2 and 3-year maturity are to be at the corresponding G-Sec rate, without any mark-up. For 5-year term deposit, the spread is 25 bps. Against the reference G-Sec yield of 6.62%, it should have been 6.87% . The rate for 5-year TD is 7.5%. The excess interest is 0.63%. This 63 bps is the 'Z' referred earlier.

> It is expected the RBI would cut the repo rate further driven by lower inflation and slower economic growth

Kisan Vikas Patra (KVP) is at zero spread; with reference point at 6.85% and rate at 7.5%, the additional interest over formula is 0.65%.

For NSC VIII Issue, which is at a mark-up of 25 bps, formula rate is 7.04%. At 7.7%, the additional interest is 0.66%.

Senior Citizen Savings Scheme (SCSS), mentioned earlier, has the highest spread of 1% over reference G-Sec yield, as a social benevolence to take care of seniors, who may not have active income. At the reference 5-year G-Sec yield of 6.62%, the formula rate is 7.62%. The rate on offer is 8.2%, implying an additional interest (Z) of 0.58%.

**Sukanya Samriddhi**
The last is Sukanya Samriddhi Account Scheme, which has the longest tenure of 21 years. The formula mark-up is 75 bps. The reference G-Sec yield is 6.85%. Against the formula rate of 7.6%, the rate is 8.2%. The additional interest girl child would get this quarter is 0.6% .

Interest rates are coming down, as the Reserve Bank of India (RBI) has been reducing the reference repo rate.

The repo rate, which was 6.5% earlier, is at 6% now. It is expected the RBI would cut the repo rate further. This is driven by lower inflation and economic growth being little lower than earlier. Consequently, G-Sec yields have eased. As an example, 10-year maturity G-Sec, which was at 7.2% a year ago and 6.85% six months ago, is at 6.36% now.

The reference G-Sec yield levels mentioned earlier pertain to the period December 2024 to February 2025. Since then, G-Sec yields are lower. The implication is, when rates for next quarter viz. July to September are announced on June 30, the reference point will be lower.

**Conclusion**
We have mentioned earlier, there is a 'generosity component' or 'Z' component in the currently prevailing Small Savings rates. With the reference rate coming down, if the government maintains the current rates, the 'Z' component will be higher.

While it is possible it maintains current rates as there is a political implication of cutting it, pressure will be higher on government's finances.

Hence there is a possibility Small Savings rates may be reduced going forward. From that perspective, if you have the money, it is advisable that you lock-in by June.

*(The writer is a corporate trainer (financial markets) and author)*

# *Not easy to diversify investment*

THINKINVESTOR

To 'diversify' investments and suggest holding investments for 'long term' is not useful unless there is a workable process to apply such suggestions to achieve goals within timeframe

**Venkatesh Bangaruswamy**

It is not uncommon to hear suggestions such as 'diversify' your portfolio and think 'long term' when the market is full of uncertainty. Now, we discuss what it takes to diversify.

**Statistically speaking**
To diversify portfolio, you should look at how a new investment you want to make is statistically related to what you already have in portfolio. Suppose you hold units in a large-cap active fund benchmarked to the NSE 100 Index. Further suppose you want to invest in a mid-cap active fund. You are expected to look at how mid-cap fund's returns correlated to large-cap fund's returns in the past. That requires you to gather past returns and statistically test how the funds behaved over time. This is when you diversify within an asset class. When you diversify across asset classes, you ought to do the same exercise between, say, equity and bond returns. Is that something we can continually do as individual investors? And that is not even the major issue.

Empirical evidence suggests that correlations are unstable over time and across market conditions. That is, two asset classes may have a weak correlation with each other when the market is moving up but have a strong correlation when the market crashes. You ought to consider these changing relationships to build a meaningfully diversified portfolio. So, the next time you are told to diversify portfolio, you should ask the person giving the suggestion on how to do it. Often, the term 'diversification' is thrown into a conversation that involves managing risk. The point is you must do a lot of analysis if you want to manage risk applying the conceptually accurate diversification process.

**Conclusion**
Often, when someone mentions diversification, they often mean spreading savings across multiple investments. But diversification is more about statistical relationship between investments, not the number of investments you hold. What is the point of holding 10 different mutual funds if all the funds invest in similar set of securities? It is best to ask questions when you are given such suggestions. Being told to 'diversify' investments and suggesting you hold investments for the 'long term' is not useful unless given a workable process to implement such suggestions to achieve life goals within a desired time horizon. There is a lot of difference between talking about an investment concept and applying it in practice.

*(The author offers training programmes for individuals to manage their personal investments)*

## Personal Loans

| Rates and Charges | | Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years | Loan amount 1 lakh Tenure 5 years | (% of loan amount) |
|---|---|---|---|---|
| **Name of Lender** | **Interest Rate (%)** | **EMI (Rs)** | **EMI (Rs)** | **Processing fee** |
| HDFC Bank | 10.90-24.00 | 10,846-14,384 | 2,169-2,877 | Up to Rs 6,500 |
| Tata Capital | 11.99 onwards | 11,120 onwards | 2,224 onwards | Up to 4% |
| State Bank of India | 10.30-15.30 | 10,697-11,974 | 2,139-2,395 | Up to 1.5% (Min. Rs 1000; Max. Rs 15,000) |
| ICICI Bank | 10.85-16.65 | 10,834-12,332 | 2,167-2,466 | Up to 2% |
| Bank of Baroda* | 10.90-18.30 | 10,846-12,778 | 2,169-2,556 | Up to 2% (Max. Rs 10,000) |
| Axis Bank | 11.25-22.00 | 10,934-13,809 | 2,187-2,762 | Up to 2% |
| Kotak Mahindra Bank | 10.99-16.99 | 10,869-12,424 | 2,174-2,485 | Up to 5% |
| Bank of India | 11.60-16.20 | 11,021-12,212 | 2,204-2,442 | Up to 1% Min. Rs 250; Max. Rs 15,000) |
| Canara Bank | 10.45-15.90 | 10,722-12,132 | 2,147-2,426 | Up to 0.25% (Max. Rs 2,500) |
| Punjab National Bank | 11.00-17.55 | 10,871-12,575 | 2,174-2,515 | Up to 1% |
| HSBC Bank | 10.15-16.00 | 10,660-12,159 | 2,132-2,432 | Up to 2% |
| Federal Bank | 11.99 onwards | 11,120 onwards | 2,224 onwards | Up to 3% |
| Union Bank of India | 10.85-14.95 | 10,834-11,882 | 2,167-2,376 | Up to 1% (Max. Rs 7,500) |
| Bajaj Finserv | 10.00-31.00 | 10,624-16,485 | 2,125-3,297 | Up to 3.93% |
| Punjab & Sind Bank | 10.35-13.40 | 10,710-11,479 | 2,142-2,296 | 0.50%-1% |
| Indian Overseas Bank | 10.50 onwards | 10,747 onwards | 2,149 onwards | Up to 0.75% |
| UCO Bank | 10.70-13.70 | 10,797-11,557 | 2,159-2,311 | Up to 1% (Min. Rs 750) |
| IDFC First Bank | 10.70 onwards | 10,796 onwards | 2,159 onwards | 2% |
| Bank of Maharashtra | 9.50-14.30 | 10,501-11,686 | 2,100-2,342 | Up to 1% (Max. Rs 10,000) |
| Central Bank of India | 10.60-12.40 | 10,772-11,224 | 2,154-2,245 | Up to 1% |
| IndusInd Bank | 10.49 onwards | 10,744 onwards | 2,149 onwards | Up to 3.5% |

*Interest concession of 0.10% to customers opting for group credit life insurance.

## Car Loans

| Rates and Charges | | Loan amount 5 lakh Tenure 5 years | (% of loan amount) |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Name of Lender** | **Interest Rate (%)** | **EMI (Rs)** | **Processing fee** |
| Union Bank of India | 8.20-9.95 | 10,186 - 10,611 | Up to Rs 1,000 |
| Punjab National Bank | 8.35-10.20 | 10,222 - 10,673 | Up to 0.25% (Rs. 1,000 - Rs. 1,500) |
| Bank of Baroda | 8.65-12.15 | 10,294 - 11,160 | Up to Rs. 2,000 |
| UCO Bank | 8.10-10.75 | 10,162 - 10,809 | 0.50% (Rs 5,000) |
| State Bank of India | 9.10-10.15 | 10,403 - 10,660 | Rs 750 - Rs 1,500 |
| IDBI Bank | 8.65-9.45 | 10,294 - 10,489 | Rs 2,500 |
| Bank of Maharashtra* | 8.20-12.50 | 10,186 - 11,249 | 0.25% of loan amount (max. up to Rs. 15,000) |
| Indian Overseas Bank** | 8.15-12.00 | 10,174 - 11,122 | 0.50% (Rs 500 - Rs 5,000) |
| ICICI Bank | 9.10 onwards | 10,403 onwards | Up to 2% |
| HDFC Bank | 9.20 onwards | 10,428 onwards | Up to 1% (Rs 3,500 - Rs 9,000) |
| Karnataka Bank | 9.32-11.80 | 10,457 - 11,072 | Up to 0.60% (Rs 2500 - Rs 11,000) |
| Federal Bank | 10.40 onwards | 10,722 onwards | Rs 2,000 - Rs 4,500 |
| Punjab and Sind Bank*** | 8.25-14.75 | 10,198 - 11,829 | 0.25% (Rs 1,000-Rs 15,000) |
| Indian Bank | 8.25-9.85 | 10,198 - 10,587 | Rs. 1000 |
| City Union Bank | 14.45-14.95 | 11,751 - 11,882 | 1.25% (Min: Rs 750) |

*0.25% interest rate concession for existing housing loan borrowers and corporate salary account holders
**0.50% interest rate concession to borrowers with credit scores of 800 and above. Interest rate concession of 0.25% to borrowers having credit scores of 750-799
***Concession of up to 50% on processing fee for PSB Apna Vahan Sugam.
**Rates and charges as on May 7** **Source: Paisabazaar.com**

GAZA

## Hamas officials cite progress in direct Gaza talks with U.S. team

AP

Hamas and U.S. representatives have held direct talks in Doha in recent days, two officials from the Palestinian militant group said on Sunday, with one saying there had been "progress" towards a truce in Gaza. Prisoner exchange and entry of humanitarian aid into the besieged strip was among the topics discussed during the talks. AFP

KABUL

## Taliban regime suspends chess over concern over gambling

AFP

The Taliban barred chess across Afghanistan until further notice over concerns that it is a source of gambling, which is illegal under the the regime's morality law. Afghanistan's authorities have restricted other sports and women have been essentially barred from participating in sport altogether in the country. AFP

TIRANA

## Albanians vote in an election seen as a key test to path towards EU

REUTERS

Albanians headed to the polls on Sunday to decide whether to give Prime Minister Edi Rama a fourth term or side with his longstanding rival in an election seen as crucial for the country's European Union ambitions. Albania, the most pro-EU country in the region, waited 13 years before accession talks officially started in July 2022. AFP

COLOMBO

## At least 21 killed in Sri Lanka as passenger bus skids off cliff

AFP

At least 21 people were killed and over 30 others injured after a passenger bus skidded off a cliff in Sri Lanka on Sunday. The state transport body-owned bus was taking 75 passengers from the southern pilgrim site of Kataragama to the northwest town of Kurunegala when it went down 100 meters off the cliff. PTI

# Zelenskyy agrees to meet Putin after Trump tells him not to await truce

Ukraine President previously said Kyiv would be willing to talk only if Moscow agreed to a ceasefire; however, that position changed following the U.S. leader's push for Zelenskyy to take up Putin's offer for direct talks in Turkiye on Thursday

**Reuters**
MOSCOW

Ukrainian President Volodymyr Zelenskyy said he would agree to meet Kremlin leader Vladimir Putin in Turkiye on Thursday after U.S. President Donald Trump told him immediately to accept Mr. Putin's proposal of direct talks.

The Ukrainian leader had responded guardedly earlier on Sunday after the Russian President, in a night-time televised statement that coincided with prime time in the U.S., proposed that Ukraine and Russia hold direct talks in Istanbul on May 15.

**Olive branch:** Russian invasion of Ukraine which began in February 2022 has killed hundreds of thousands of soldiers. GETTY IMAGES

It was not clear that Mr. Putin had proposed to attend in person, however.

"I will be waiting for Putin in Türkiye on Thursday. Personally. I hope that this time the Russians will not look for excuses," Mr. Zelenskyy wrote on X.

Mr. Putin's proposal came hours after major European powers demanded on Saturday in Kyiv that Mr. Putin agree to an unconditional 30-day ceasefire or face "massive" new sanctions, a position that Mr. Trump's Ukraine envoy Keith Kellogg endorsed on Sunday.

Mr. Zelenskyy too had said Ukraine would be ready for talks with Russia, but only after Moscow agreed to the 30-day ceasefire.

But Mr. Trump, who has the power to continue or sever Washington's crucial supply of arms to Ukraine, took a different line.

"President Putin of Russia doesn't want to have a Cease Fire Agreement with Ukraine, but rather wants to meet on Thursday, in Turkey, to negotiate a possible end to the BLOODBATH. Ukraine should agree to this, IMMEDIATELY," Mr. Trump wrote on Truth Social.

"At least they will be able to determine whether or not a deal is possible, and if it is not, European leaders, and the U.S., will know where everything stands, and can proceed accordingly!"

Mr. Putin sent Russia's armed forces into Ukraine in February 2022, unleashing a conflict that has killed hundreds of thousands of soldiers and triggered the gravest confrontation between Russia and the West since the 1962 Cuban Missile Crisis.

# Awami League vows to carry on operations despite ban

**Press Trust of India**
DHAKA/NEW DELHI

Bangladesh's deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina-led Awami League on Sunday rejected "with disgust" the interim government's decision to ban the party and vowed to continue its operations despite the restriction.

The Muhammad Yunus-led interim government's Council of Advisers or the Cabinet on Saturday night slapped a ban on "all activities of Awami League", including in cyberspace, under an anti-terrorism law.

Reacting to the move, in a strongly worded statement posted on X, the Awami League said, "We are rejecting and protesting the fascist autocrat Yunus government's decision with disgust...Awami League will carry on its activities in an appropriate course, defying the decision of the fascist Yunus government."

**Pressure tactics:** Protesters demand a ban on deposed Prime Minister Sheikh Hasina's Awami League in Dhaka on Sunday. AP

The party regretted that "today's independent Bangladesh" had to witness the ban on Awami League activities by an "undemocratic fascist" government that now runs the country "without people's mandate", while the country "earned independence and sovereignty under its (Awami League's) leadership".

The Election Commission (EC) in the country has said it is awaiting a formal government notification to decide on scrapping the registration of the Awami League.

## Iran hangs to death man convicted of raping woman

**Agence France-Presse**
TEHRAN

Iranian authorities on Sunday executed a man convicted of raping a young woman in the northern province of Semnan, the judiciary said.

The convict, who was not identified, "was executed by hanging," said the judiciary's Mizan Online website, without providing further details on the incident.

Mizan reported that the case went through "the necessary legal formalities."

The Islamic republic maintains the death penalty for several crimes, including rape and sexual assault.

Iran carries out the highest number of executions globally after China, according to rights groups.

## Iran and U.S. wrap up nuclear talks with no major breakthrough

**Agence France-Presse**
MUSCAT

**Iran says the fourth round of talks was 'difficult but useful' while U.S. said it was encouraging**

Iran and the United States wrapped up nuclear talks in Oman on Sunday with no apparent breakthrough in a public stand-off over enrichment, but with both sides confirming plans for future negotiations.

This was the fourth round of talks that began nearly a month ago, since Washington withdrew in 2018 from a landmark nuclear deal, during U.S. President Donald Trump's first term.

Both sides had reported progress in the previous three rounds, and on Sunday Iran said the meeting was "difficult but useful" while a senior U.S. official said Washington was "encouraged".

The U.S. official, speaking on condition of anonymity, said Washington was "look forward to our next meeting, which will happen in the near future".

Following the talks, Foreign Minister Abbas Araghchi, who led Tehran's delegation, reiterated Iran's stance on enrichment, saying it "must continue and there is no room for compromise on it". He noted the latest meeting was "more serious" than previous rounds, saying Tehran may be open to limit the rate of enrichment "to help build trust".

## Washington 'optimistic' amid China trade talks

**Agence France-Presse**
GENEVA

Washington expressed optimism as talks with top Chinese officials continued for a second day on Sunday in a bid to de-escalate trade tensions sparked by U.S. President Donald Trump's aggressive tariff rollout.

As the two days of high-level negotiations in Geneva neared an end, U.S. Commerce Secretary Howard Lutnick told *CNN* on Sunday the administration was "optimistic that things will work out well".

That comment came after Mr. Trump posted on Truth Social following the first day of talks that Saturday's discussions had been "very good", deeming them "a total reset negotiated in a friendly, but constructive, manner".

## U.K. govt. to end its 'failed free market trial' in immigration

**Reuters**
LONDON

The British government outlined plans on Sunday to end what it called the "failed free market experiment" in mass immigration by restricting skilled worker visas to graduate-level jobs and forcing businesses to increase training for local workers.

Under the government's new plans, skilled visas will only be granted to people in graduate jobs, while visas for lower-skilled roles will only be issued in areas critical to the nation's industrial strategy, and in return businesses must increase training of British workers.

Companies in the care sector will no longer be able to seek visas for workers recruited abroad.

**White paper**

The Labour government said the changes will be part of a policy document, known as a white paper, to be published on Monday setting out how ministers plan to reduce immigration.

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|---|---|---|---|
| **CIASL/ENGG/32/2025-26** Interior works of CIASL New Business Park | 210 Lakhs | 4.2 Lakhs | 6 months |
| **CIASL/ENGG/32/2025-26-A** ELV works of CIASL New Business Park | 105 Lakhs | 2.1 Lakhs | 6 months |

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**ON THE RISE**

## Smriti climbs to third in the list of century-makers in women's ODIs

FILE PHOTO: VIJAY SONEJI

India opener Smriti Mandhana slammed a hundred in the tri-series final against Sri Lanka in Colombo on Sunday. With 11 centuries, she is now third behind former Australia captain Meg Lanning (15) and New Zealand's Suzie Bates (13) in the list of century-makers in women's ODIs.

**WELL-PLANNED**

## Sneh thrilled at seeing her hard work paying dividends

X@BCCIWOMEN

I'm very pleased to have contributed to the team. I've practised very hard. The plan was simple, stick to off-pace and yorker deliveries, spoke with the bowling coach and that worked. Pretty confident about myself and the team, everyone is coming up and taking up the challenge. — Player-of-the-tournament Sneh Rana

**TALK TIME**

## Consultations will be held with franchises: Saikia on IPL restart

FILE PHOTO

BCCI secretary Devajit Saikia said consultations will begin in the next few days with IPL franchises, broadcasters, sponsors and state associations slated to host the remaining matches before taking a decision on the league's resumption. "It will also be necessary to take the Centre's nod before finalising the time for its restart."

**BRAVING IT OUT**

## Ponting convinces Punjab Kings' foreign players to return

PTI

PBKS head coach Ricky Ponting was about to take off for home when the 'understanding' between India and Pakistan came into force. He stayed back in New Delhi and also ensured the foreign players were convinced about returning to India with the event likely to resume soon. Marco Jansen and Azmatullah Omarzai are camped in Dubai.

# Smriti sizzles with century as clinical India routs Sri Lanka to win title

Left-handed opener's 101-ball 116 powers the visiting team to a mammoth score in the summit clash; Harleen, Jemima and Harmanpreet chip in with crucial knocks; Sneh, Amanjot prove too hot to handle for the home side; Chamari's fighting half-century goes in vain

**TRI-SERIES**

**Press Trust of India**
COLOMBO

**Dominant:** Team India rode on Smriti's splendid knock and the bowlers' fine show to romp to victory. X/@BCCIWOMEN

India displayed absolute dominance to crush Sri Lanka by 97 runs and earn a well-deserved title triumph in the Women's Tri-Nation ODI series after vice-captain Smriti Mandhana's sublime century and the bowlers' collective effort in the title clash here on Sunday.

After Smriti rose to the occasion to power India to a commanding 342 for seven, the bowlers completed the task by bundling out Sri Lanka for 245, with Sneh Rana (four for 38) and Amanjot Kaur (three for 54) doing the bulk of the damage.

Skipper Chamari Athapaththu (51 off 66 balls) and Nilakshika Silva (48 off 58) were the chief contributors for the hosts.

Earlier, battling cramps in humid conditions, elegant left-hander Smriti, who had returned to form with a fifty in India's last match against South Africa, struck a majestic 116 off 101 balls to lay the foundation for India's imposing total after skipper Harmanpreet Kaur opted to bat.

Her knock was laced with 15 fours and two sixes, including four successive boundaries off Chamari to bring up her 11th ODI hundred in style.

After the dismissal of Pratika Rawal for 30, Smriti shifted gears smoothly. She made Sri Lanka pay for dropping her on 21 as she was involved in two big partnerships – 70 for the first wicket with Pratika and 120 for the second with Harleen Deol.

But her dismissal set the stage for a strong finish as Jemimah Rodrigues, coming off a career-best 123 against South Africa, smashed a quick-fire 44 off 29 balls (4x4), while Harmanpreet contributed a brisk 41 off 30 (4x4, 1x6) as India piled on 90 runs in the last 10 overs.

Set a formidable target, the home team needed a strong start, but instead, they lost Hasini Perera to Amanjot in only the third ball of the Sri Lankan innings. Sri Lanka was one down without a run on the board. Captain Chamari and Vishmi Gunaratne (36 off 41 balls) put up a good fight but the team faltered once Deepti Sharma dismissed Vishmi.

**The scores:** India 342/7 in 50 overs (Smriti 116, Harleen 47, Jemimah 44, Harmanpreet 41) bt Sri Lanka 245 in 48.2 overs (Vishmi 36, Chamari 51, Nilakshika 48, Amanjot 3/54, Sneh Rana 4/38) by 97 runs.
**PoM:** Smriti; **PoS:** Sneh Rana.

# Harmanpreet concerned over Indian pacers' frequent injuries

**Press Trust of India**
COLOMBO

Harmanpreet. X/@BCCIWOMEN

India women's team captain Harmanpreet Kaur on Sunday expressed her concerns about her pacers' frequent tryst with injuries and said the support staff is looking to address it before the ODI World Cup comes calling.

Harmanpreet was speaking after India's title triumph in the Tri-Nation ODI series following its 97-run win over Sri Lanka in the final here.

"Proud of the entire team, especially the batters, we wanted to play good cricket, were looking to bat first if we win the toss and pretty happy with how we played," Harmanpreet said at the presentation ceremony.

"We can never stop improving, lots of areas where we can keep doing better, be it batting, bowling or fielding. Our pacers keep getting injured, that's something we need to keep care of, the coaches are working on it." Harmanpreet added.

"The way the other batters apart from Smriti and me, the way they batted was a big positive. The way Sneh Rana bowled was also a big positive. There are a lot of positives to talk about, but just want the enjoy the moment right now.

"Enjoyed the conditions here in Sri Lanka, we did struggle to get accustomed to the heat."

# Sabalenka battles past Kenin; Zverev cruises on

**ITALIAN OPEN**

**Agence France-Presse**
ROME

**Coming through:** Sabalenka fought back from a set down to book a round-of-16 encounter with Kostyuk. AFP

Aryna Sabalenka reached the last 16 of the Italian Open on Sunday after battling back from a set down to beat Sofia Kenin 3-6, 6-3, 6-3 to continue her bid for a first Rome title.

World No. 1 Sabalenka came through a tough match with former Australian Open winner Kenin to set up a clash with Marta Kostyuk, who beat Leylah Fernandez 6-4, 6-2.

The Belarusian has reached the final of her last four tournaments, winning in both Miami and Madrid, and is now hot favourite at the Foro Italico.

Last year's losing finalist was not at the races in the first set, consistently misplacing her backhands before appearing to complain about the surface on centre court.

Sabalenka continued to lament her performance even as she slowly turned the match around, breaking Kenin at the seventh time of asking in the second game of the third set before immediately being broken back to love.

But in the end she had too much for Kenin, showing her fighting spirit even while battling against her own performance.

One of Sabalenka's key rivals for the women's title, Coco Gauff, cruised past Magda Linette in straight sets 7-5, 6-3 and will be expected to see off Emma Raducanu in the next round.

Alexander Zverev continued his title defence by cruising past qualifier Vilius Gaubas 6-4, 6-0.

France's Arthur Fils came through 2-6, 6-4, 6-2 an eventful match with former Rome finalist Tsitsipas which ended with the pair arguing over the net.

Fils, who will next meet Zverev, was hit by a Tsitsipas shot in the seventh game of the second set.

And Tsitsipas was angry at Fils for ignoring his apologies, sparking a post-match row which caused the umpire to come down from his chair.

Daniil Medvedev swept past Alexei Popyrin 6-4, 6-1 and next faces home hope Lorenzo Musetti who followed Sabalenka on centre court by beating Brandon Nakashima 6-4, 6-3.

World No. 9 Musetti is the first of the four Italians left in the men's tournament to reach the last 16, and he did it in his first week as a member of the world's top 10.

**The results: Third round: Men:** Khachanov bt Passaro 6-3, 6-0. Medvedev bt Popyrin 6-4, 6-1; Fils bt Tsitsipas 2-6, 6-4, 6-2; Musetti bt Nakashima 6-4, 6-3; Moutet bt Rune 7-5, 5-7, 7-6(4); Zverev bt Gaubas 6-4, 6-0; Draper bt Kopriva 6-4, 6-3.

**Women:** Qinwen bt Frech 6-3, 6-2; Tauson bt Navarro 3-6, 6-0, 6-4. Kostyuk bt Fernandez 6-4, 6-2; Sabalenka bt Kenin 3-6, 6-3, 6-3; Gauff bt Linette 7-5, 6-3; Raducanu bt Kudermetova 5-7, 6-0, 6-1; Andreescu bt Rybakina 6-2, 6-4.

# Barcelona has one hand on LaLiga with fightback win over Real Madrid

**EURO LEAGUES**

**Agencies**
BARCELONA

**Unstoppable:** Raphinha scores Barcelona's third against Real Madrid. AP

Barcelona mounted a spectacular comeback to beat Real Madrid 4-3 in La Liga on Sunday and move to the brink of the title after overcoming a hat-trick from Kylian Mbappe.

The France striker threatened to haul Madrid back into the title race but Raphinha's double and goals from Lamine Yamal and Eric Garcia gave Barcelona a seven-point lead on the reigning champion with three matches remaining.

"We've opened up an important gap, it was key to win this game after the Champions League (defeat), the fans have forgotten it and so have we, let's enjoy this," Yamal told Movistar.

"It was important to win today to bring the league title closer and it went very well, we're very happy."

"We have to defend better, that is quite evident from today's game, we defended badly and that's that," said Real coach Carlo Ancelotti.

Atletico Madrid striker Alexander Sorloth scored four goals in the first half hour and set a record for the fastest hat-trick in LaLiga history to fuel a 4-0 rout of Real Sociedad on Saturday.

The Norway striker scored his hat-trick in the seventh, 10th and 11th minutes. His treble was the fastest in LaLiga history, according to Opta Statistics, which said that it beat the previous mark of three goals in the first 15 minutes by Edmundo Suarez de Trabanco in 1941.

Arsenal fought back from two goals down to rescue a valuable 2-2 Premier League draw against Liverpool as the Gunners moved a step closer to qualifying for the Champions League on Sunday.

Earier, Newcastle took a huge step towards qualifying for the Champions League as Sandro Tonali inspired a vital 2-0 victory over top five rival Chelsea.

**The results:**
**Premier League:** Newcastle 2 (Tonali 2, Guimaraes 90) bt Chelsea 0; Manchester United 0 lost to West Ham 2 (Soucek 26, Bowen 57); Nottingham Forest 2 (Gibbs-White 25, Wood 56) drew with Leicester 2 (Coady 16, Buonanotte 81); Tottenham 0 lost to Crystal Palace 2 (Eze 45, 48); Liverpool 2 (Gakpo 20, Diaz 21) drew with Arsenal 2 (Martinelli 47, Merino 70).
**LaLiga:** Leganes 3 (Cisse 33, Diomande 41, Kumbulla 63-og) bt Espanyol 2 (Cabrera 79, Milla 90+8); Barcelona 4 (Garcia 19, Yamal 32, Raphinha 34, 45) bt Real Madrid 3 (Mbappe 5-pen, 14, 70).

**Bundesliga:** Bayer Leverkusen 2 (Frimpong 31, Hofmann 90+2) lost to Borussia Dortmund 4 (Brandt 33, Ryerson 43, Adeyemi 73, Guirassy 77).

**On Saturday: LaLiga:** Valencia 3 (Pepelu 8-pen, Lopez 18, Duro 37-pen) bt Getafe 0; Celta Vigo 3 (Moriba 19, Mingueza 65, Iglesias 90+1) bt Sevilla 2 (Gudelj 45+8-pen, Salas 90+8); Real Mallorca 2 (Mascarell 28, Darder 49) bt Valladolid (Chuki 11); Girona 0 lost to Villarreal 1 (Eyong 89); Atletico Madrid 4 (Sorloth 7, 10, 11, 30) bt Real Sociedad 0.

**Bundesliga:** Bayern Munich 2 (Kane 31, Olise 90) bt Borussia Moenchengladbach 0.

# Gukesh, Pragg held to draws in Superbet Classic chess

**Sports Bureau**

Indian Grandmasters D. Gukesh and R.Praggnanandhaa were on Sunday held to draws by Jan-Krzysztof Duda and Maxime Vachier-Lagrave respectively in the fifth round of the Superbet Classic Romania chess in Bucharest.

World champion Gukesh, who had lost to France's Vachier-Lagrave in the previous round, held Poland's Duda in 49 moves.

Praggnanandhaa played out a second straight draw against the Frenchman, with whom he shares the lead with three points.

**Karthikeyan on top**

In the Asian Continental championship in Al Ain (UAE), GM Murali Karthikeyan made sure he stayed on the top, defeating Alexey Grebnev of Russia in the fifth round on Sunday. With 4.5 points, Karthikeyan shares the lead with Iran's Bardiya Daneshvar, who defeated P. Iniyan of India.

In the women's section, Srija Seshadri beat Xeniya Balabayeva of Kazakhstan to share the lead with Anastasia Bodnaruk of Russia on 4.5 points.

Earlier, Karthikeyan had finished fourth in blitz championships, with Padmini Rout replicating the result in women's section.

## INBRIEF

### Kynan-Sabeera pair wins mixed trap bronze

Olympian Kynan Chenai and Sabeera Haris combined well to beat Turkey's Tolga Tuncer and Rumeysa Kaya 34-33 and claim the mixed trap bronze medal in the shotgun World Cup which concluded in Nicosia, Cyprus, on Sunday. The Indian pair had shot 142 in qualification and beat Taiwan's Wan-Yu Liu and Kun-Pi Yang 4-2 in the shoot-off to break the tie and to qualify for the bronze medal match.

**The results: Mixed trap:** 1. China (Qi Ying, Zhang Zixi) 42 (143), 2. Poland (Tomasz Pasierbski, Sandra Bernal) 39 (146), 3. India (Kynan Chenai, Sabeera Haris) 34 (142); 17. India-2 (Kirti Gupta, Shardul Vihan) 137.

### Nirupama finishes fourth in Asian weightlifting

Two failed clean and jerk attempts cost Indian weightlifter Nirupama Devi a bronze medal as she finished fourth in the women's 64kg category at the Asian championships at Jiangshan (China) on Sunday. The 24-year-old, an Asian youth championships medallist, managed 115kg in clean and jerk as she faltered in her attempts to heave 120kg and 125kg, adding to her 91kg snatch for a total of 206kg in the non-Olympic category.

**The medallists:** 1. Li Shuang (Chn) 239kg (105kg+134kg), 2. Elreen Ann Ando (Phi) 232kg (102kg+130kg), 3. Mun Min-hee (Kor) 214kg (94kg+120kg).

### Australian legend Cowper passes away aged 84

Bob Cowper, who scored Test cricket's first triple century on Australian soil, has died at the age of 84 due to an undisclosed illness, Cricket Australia said on Sunday. Cowper played 27 Test matches for Australia between 1964 and 1968, with a record of 2,061 runs at an average of 46.84, including five centuries, while also taking 36 wickets with his part-time off-spin. He also later became an ICC match referee.

# Salunkhe, Deepika win recurve bronze

This is the 2023 World youth under-21 champion's maiden World Cup Stage medal, while the four-time Olympian bagged her first for this season

ARCHERY

**Sports Bureau**

**Creditable show:** Salunkhe and Deepika in action on their way to claiming third place. GETTY IMAGES

Parth Salunkhe and Deepika Kumari performed creditably well to clinch the recurve men's and women's individual bronze medals respectively on the concluding day of the Archery World Cup Stage-2 in Shanghai on Sunday.

After getting beaten 6-4 by current Olympics champion Kim Woojin in a tough semifinal clash, 2023 World youth under-21 champion Salunkhe got the better of 18-year-old Paris Olympics men's team silver medallist Frenchman Baptiste Addis 6-4 in a keenly-fought bronze medal match. This was Salunkhe's maiden World Cup Stage medal.

Four-time Olympian Deepika, who lost to Korea's reigning Olympic champion and World No.1 Lim Sihyeon 7-1 in the last-four stage, held her nerve to defeat another Korean, Tokyo Olympics team gold medallist Kang Chaeyoung, 7-3 in a battle for the bronze and bagged her first World Cup Stage medal of the season.

"I didn't expect anything from me. My mission is different. That is very important for me because there is a different environment, a different feeling, a little anxiety, a little happiness. I want to achieve that (gold) in that place," Deepika told World Archery on her 2028 Olympics ambition.

**The results: Recurve: Men:** Parth Salunkhe lost to Kim Woojin (Kor) 6-4 (27-26, 30-28, 27-28, 28-29, 28-25) (semifinal), bt Baptiste Addis (Fra) 6-4 (30-28, 28-28, 25-25, 27-30, 29-28) (bronze medal match).
**Women:** Deepika Kumari lost to Lim Sihyeon (Kor) 7-1 (27-26, 28-28, 30-28, 29-28) (semifinal), bt Kang Chaeyoung (Kor) 7-3 (27-27, 28-27, 27-30, 30-29, 29-28) (bronze medal match).

# Mukund hopes to find his rhythm again

TENNIS

**Kamesh Srinivasan**
NEW DELHI

In the intensely competitive world of tennis, it is easy to lose one's way – and game – in the rat race for rankings.

Experience has taught 28-year-old S. Mukund the need to occasionally step back and re-focus, get stronger with one's game and fitness.

Mukund has slipped to be No. 3 in the country behind Sumit Nagal (169) and the 19-year-old Aryan Shah (450). Ranked 456, with two ATP points keeping

Mukund. FILE PHOTO

him away from the No. 2 status in the country, Mukund is not worried.

"I was ranked No. 1 briefly. I was losing close matches. I decided to work on the aspects to get better. Took time off to train," said Mukund on Sunday, hours after returning from China, where he had lost the semifinals against the No.1 seed.

After playing a series of Challengers, apart from the successful Davis Cup tie against Togo at home, Mukund decided to prepare well and compete in the ITF event in Botou.

"Playing the four Challengers in India immediately after the Davis Cup was hard. And then, one had to play in the qualifying event in a couple of them. Experience teaches us about the art of making the right choice," said Mukund.

## Indian relay teams miss out

**Press Trust of India**
GUANGZHOU

India's campaign at the World Athletics Relays ended as the men's 4x400m and mixed 4x400m teams missed out on qualifying for the Tokyo World Championships.

The mixed 4x400m team of Santhosh Kumar Tamilarasan, Rupal Chaudhary, Thennarasu Kayalvizhi Vishal and Subha Venkatesan (3:14.81s) finished fourth in heat number 2.

The men's 4x400m quartet of Jay Kumar, Dharmveer Choudhary, Thekkinalil Saji Manu and Rince Joseph finished seventh in 3:04.49.

## BENGALURU ROUND-UP

### Aakarsh nets two as Stadium FC wins easily against Undisputed FC

Aakarsh Karuturi scored a brace as Stadium FC blanked Undisputed FC 4-0 in the KSFA C division football league here on Sunday.
**The results:** Stadium FC 4 (Aakarsh Karuturi 8, 18, Ziam Ahamed 32, Vivek Kumar 42) bt Undisputed FC 0; La Esperanza 2 (Jerome 44, 52) drew with BNFC 2 (K. Pranav 14, 34).

### Nikshit stars in The School of Cricket's victory over Southern Cricketers

Nikshit Jain scalped four wickets (4/13) as The School of Cricket beat Southern Cricketers by 49 runs in the Tiger Cup U-12 cricket tournament.
**The scores:** CricLife Academy 156 in 25 overs (Diya 46, Sravan 41, Ayushman Tripathi 4/26) bt BootCamp 153/3 in 25 overs (Lagan Gangaiah Gowda 40, Jishnuver 40, Ayushman Tripathi 31).
The School of Cricket 89 in 17.4 overs (P. Chirayush 4/12, S. Amoghvarsh 3/32) bt Southern Cricketers 50 in 15.3 overs (Nikshit Jain 4/13).
Gopalan Sports Centre 218 in 29.2 overs (Rusheel Suhas 45, Tanash Govila 41, Tanish Patra 29, A. Krishav 28) bt Samprasiddi Sports Estadio 127/8 in 30 overs (Aryan Pradeep 42, Aisha Indulkar 34).

### LIVE TELECAST

**Tennis:** Italian Open, Sony Sports Ten 5 (SD & HD) & LIV, 2.30 p.m.
**LaLiga:** FanCode, 12.30 a.m. (Tuesday)